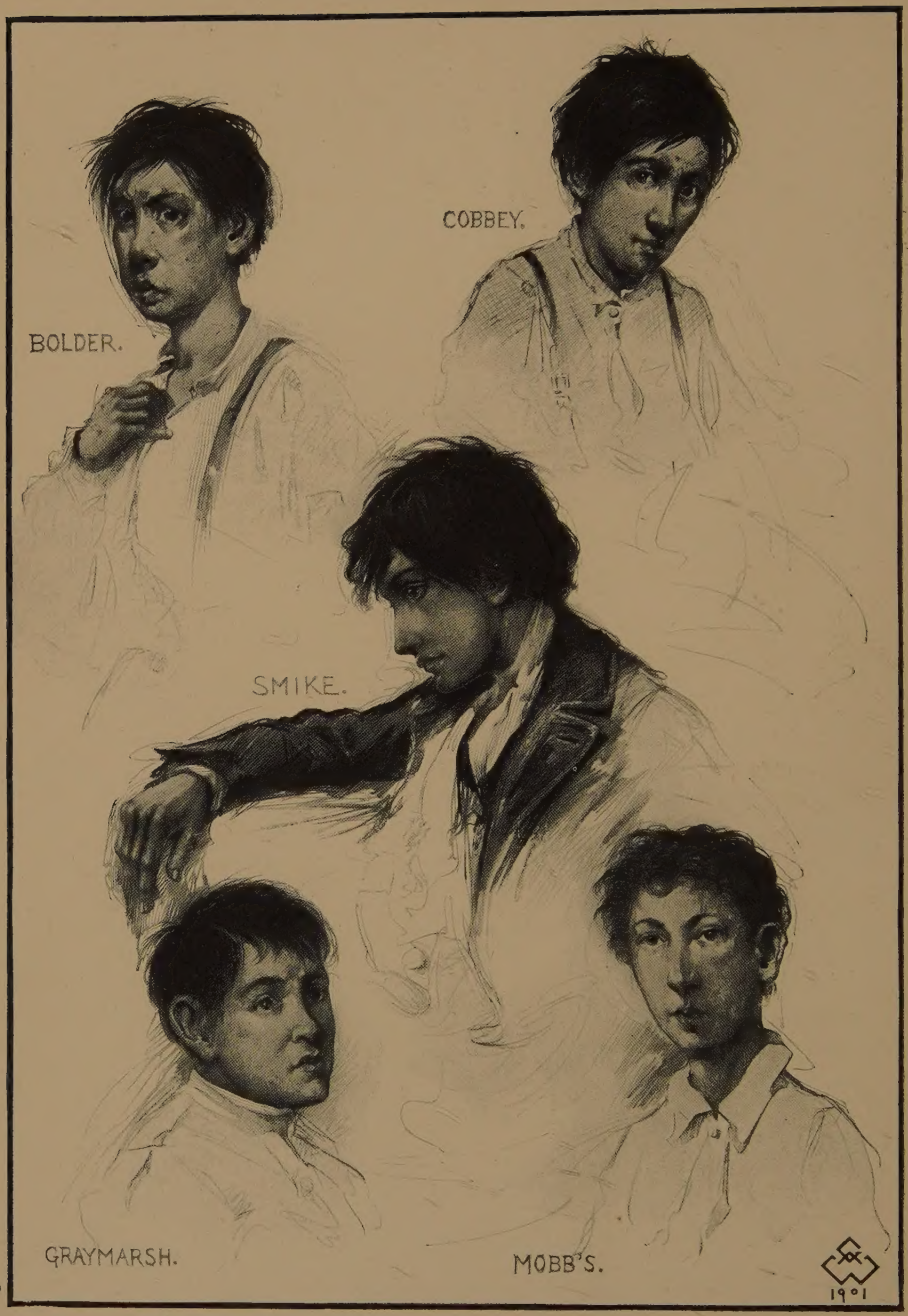
TEN BOYS

FROM DICKENS

TEN BOYS *from* CHARLES DICKENS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TEN BOYS *from* DICKENS

By

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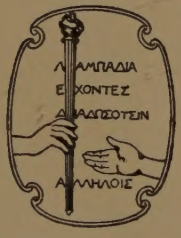
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PREFACE

IN this small volume there are presented as complete stories the boy-lives portrayed in the works of Charles Dickens. The boys are followed only to the threshold of manhood, and in all cases the original text of the story has been kept, except where of necessity a phrase or paragraph has been inserted to connect passages; — while the net-work of characters with which the boys are surrounded in the books from which they are taken, has been eliminated, except where such characters seem necessary to the development of the story in hand.

Charles Dickens was a loyal champion of all boys, and underlying his pen pictures of them was an earnest desire to remedy evils which he had found existing in London and its suburbs. Poor Jo, who was always being "moved on," David Copperfield, whose early life was a picture of Dickens' own childhood, workhouse-reared Oliver, and the miserable wretches at Dotheboy Hall were no mere creations of an author's vivid imagination. They were descriptions of living boys, the victims of tyranny and oppression which Dickens felt he must in some way alleviate. And so he wrote his

novels with the histories in them which affected the London public far more deeply, of course, than they affect us, and awakened a storm of indignation and protest.

Schools, work-houses, and other public institutions were subjected to a rigorous examination, and in consequence several were closed, while all were greatly improved. Thus, in his sketches of boy-life, Dickens accomplished his object.

My aim is to bring these sketches, with all their beauty and pathos, to the notice of the young people of to-day. If through this volume any boy or girl should be aroused to a keener interest in the great writer, and should learn to love him and his work, my labour will be richly repaid.

KATE DICKINSON SWEETSER

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TINY TIM

Tiny Tim and his Father.

TEN BOYS *from* CHARLES DICKENS

TINY TIM

CHARLES DICKENS has given us no picture of Tiny Tim, but at the thought of him comes a vision of a delicate figure, less boy than spirit. We seem to see a face oval in shape and fair in colouring. We see eyes deep-set and grey, shaded by lashes as dark as the hair parted from the middle of his low forehead. We see a sunny, patient smile which from time to time lights up his whole face, and a mouth whose firm, strong lines reveal clearly the beauty of character, and the happiness of disposition, which were Tiny Tim's.

He was a rare little chap indeed, and a prime favourite as well. Ask the Crachits old and young, whose smile they most desired, whose applause they most coveted, whose errands they almost fought with one another to run, whose sadness or pain could most affect the family happiness, and with one voice they would answer, "Tim's!"

It was Christmas Day, and in all the suburbs of London there was to be no merrier celebration than at the Crachits. To be sure, Bob Crachit had but fifteen "Bob" himself a week on which to clothe and feed all the little Crachits, but what they lacked in luxuries they made up in affection and contentment, and would not have changed places, one of them, with any king or queen.

While Bob took Tiny Tim to church, preparations for the feast were going on at home. Mrs. Crachit was dressed in a twice-turned gown, but brave in ribbons which are cheap and make a goodly show for sixpence; and she laid the cloth, assisted by Belinda, second of her daughters, also brave in ribbons, while Master Peter Crachit plunged a fork into a saucepan full of potatoes, getting the corners of his monstrous shirt collar (Bob's private property, conferred upon his son and heir in honour of the day) into his mouth, but rejoiced to find himself so finely dressed, and yearning to show his linen in the fashionable Parks.

Two smaller Crachits, boy and girl, came tearing in, screaming that outside the baker's they had smelt the goose, and known it for their own; and basking in luxurious thoughts of sage and onions, these young Crachits danced about the table, and exalted Master Peter Crachit to the skies, while he (not proud, although his collar almost choked him) blew the fire, until the slow potatoes, bubbling up, knocked loudly at the saucepan-lid to be let out and peeled.

"What has ever got your precious father, then?" said Mrs. Crachit. "And your brother, Tiny Tim! And Martha war n't as late last Christmas Day by half an hour!"

"Here's Martha, mother!" cried the two young Crachits. "*Hurrah!* there's *such* a goose, Martha!"

"Why, bless your heart alive, dear, how late you are!" said Mrs. Crachit, kissing the daughter, who lived away from home, a dozen times. "Well, never mind as long as you are come!"

"There's father coming!" cried the two young Crachits, who were everywhere at once. "*Hide*, Martha, *hide!*"

So Martha hid herself, and in came little Bob, the father, with at least three feet of comforter hanging down before him, and his threadbare clothes darned up and brushed to look seasonable; and Tiny Tim upon his shoulder. Why was the

child thus carried? Alas for Tiny Tim, he bore a little crutch and had his limbs supported by an iron frame! Patient little Tim,—never was he heard to utter a fretful or complaining word. No wonder they cherished him so tenderly!

"Why, where's our Martha?" cried Bob Crachit looking round.

"Not coming!" said Mrs. Crachit.

"Not coming?" said Bob, with a sudden declension in his high spirits; for he had been Tim's blood horse all the way from church, and had come home rampant.

"Not coming upon Christmas Day!"

Martha did n't like to see him disappointed, if it were only in joke; so she ran out from behind the closet door, and ran into his arms, while the two young Crachits hustled Tiny Tim, and bore him off into the wash-house, that he might hear the pudding singing in the copper.

"And how did little Tim behave?" asked Mrs. Crachit; when she had rallied Bob on his credulity, and Bob had hugged his daughter to his heart's content.

"As good as gold," said Bob, "and better. Somehow he gets thoughtful, sitting by himself so much, and thinks the strangest things you ever heard. He told me, coming home, that 'he hoped the people saw him in the church, because he was a cripple, and it might be pleasant to them to remember upon Christmas Day, Who made lame beggars walk and blind men see.'"

Bob's voice was tremulous when he told them this, and it trembled more when he said that Tiny Tim was growing strong and hearty.

His active little crutch was heard upon the floor, and back came Tiny Tim before another word was spoken, escorted by his brother and sister to his stool before the fire; and while Bob compounded some hot mixture in a jug and put it on

the hob to simmer, Master Peter and the two young Crachits went to fetch the goose, with which they soon returned in high procession.

Such a bustle ensued that you might have thought the goose the rarest of all birds, and in truth it *was* something very like it in that house. Mrs. Crachit made the gravy hissing hot; Master Peter mashed the potatoes with incredible vigour; Miss Belinda sweetened up the apple sauce; Martha dusted the hot plates; Bob took Tiny Tim beside him in a corner at the table; the two young Crachits set chairs for everybody, not forgetting themselves, and mounting guard upon their posts, crammed spoons into their mouths, lest they should shriek for goose before their turn came to be helped. At last the dishes were set on and grace was said. It was succeeded by a breathless pause, as Mrs. Crachit, looking slowly along the carving knife, prepared to plunge it in the breast. When she did one murmur of delight arose all round the board, and even Tiny Tim, excited by the two young Crachits, beat on the table with the handle of his knife, and feebly cried "Hurrah!"

There never was such a goose! its tenderness and size, flavour and cheapness, were the themes of universal admiration. Eked out by apple-sauce and mashed potatoes, every one had enough, and the youngest Crachits were steeped in sage and onion to the eyebrows! But now, the plates being changed, Mrs. Crachit left the room alone — too nervous to bear witnesses — to take the pudding up, and bring it in.

Suppose it should not be done enough! Suppose it should break in turning out! All sorts of horrors were supposed.

Hallo! a great deal of steam! The pudding was out of the copper, and in half a minute Mrs. Crachit entered, flushed, but smiling proudly, with the pudding blazing in

ignited brandy, and with Christmas holly stuck into the top.

Its appearance was hailed with cheers and with exclamations of joyous admiration. Then, when it was safely landed upon the table, what a racket and clatter there was! Such stories and songs and jokes, and such riotous applause no one can imagine who was not there to see and hear!

At last the dinner was all done, the cloth was cleared, the hearth swept, and the fire made up. The compound in the jug being tasted and pronounced perfect, apples and oranges were put upon the table and a shovelful of chestnuts on the fire. Then all the Crachit family drew round the hearth, Tiny Tim very close to his father's side, upon his little stool, while he gave them a song in his plaintive little voice, about a lost child, and sang it very well indeed.

At Bob Crachit's elbow stood the family display of glass; two tumblers and a custard cup without a handle. These held the hot stuff from the jug, however, as well as golden goblets would have done, and Bob served it out with beaming looks, while the chestnuts sputtered and cracked noisily. Then Bob proposed:

"*A merry Christmas to us all, my dears, — God bless us!*"

which was just what was needed to bring the joy and enthusiasm to a climax. Cheer after cheer went up, over and over the toast was re-echoed, and then one was added for the family ogre, Bob's hard employer, Mr. Scrooge, and one for old and for young, for sick and for well, for Father Christmas and for Father Crachit and for all the little Crachits; — for everyone everywhere who had heard the holiday bells, there was a toast given. Then when the uproar ceased for a moment, low and sweet spoke Tiny Tim alone:

"*God bless us every one!*"

Clearly it rang out in the earnest childish voice. There was a sudden hush of the merriment, while Bob's arm stole round his son with a firmer grasp and for a moment the shadow of a coming Christmas fell upon him, when the little stool would be vacant and the little crutch unused.

Spirit of Tiny Tim, thy childish essence was from God! Thou didst not know that in the benediction of lives like thine, is given the answer to such prayers. Much did thy loved ones learn from thee; much can the world learn of the nobility of patience from thy sweet child life. Unawares thou wert thyself an answer to thy Christmas prayer:

"God bless us every one!"

OLIVER TWIST

Oliver Twist.

OLIVER TWIST

OLIVER TWIST was the child of an unknown woman who died in the workhouse of an English village, almost as soon as her babe drew his first breath. The mother's name being unknown, the workhouse officials called the child Oliver Twist, under which title he grew up. For nine years he was farmed out at a branch poorhouse, where with twenty or thirty other children he bore all the miseries consequent on neglect, abuse, and starvation. He was then removed to the workhouse proper to be taught a useful trade.

His ninth birthday found him a pale, thin child, diminutive in stature, and decidedly small in circumference, but possessed of a good sturdy spirit, which was not broken by the policy of the officials who tried to get as much work out of the paupers as possible, and to keep them on as scant a supply of food as would sustain life.

The boys were fed in a large stone hall, with a copper at one end, out of which the gruel was ladled at meal-times. Of this festive composition each boy had one porringer, and no more — except on occasions of great public rejoicing, when he had two ounces and a quarter of bread besides. The bowls never wanted washing. The boys polished them with their spoons till they shone again; and when they had performed this operation, they would sit staring at the copper, as if they could have devoured the very bricks of which it was composed; sucking their fingers, with the view of catching up any stray splashes of gruel that might have been cast thereon.

Boys have generally excellent appetites. Oliver Twist and his companions suffered the tortures of slow starvation for three months: at last they got so voracious and wild that one boy hinted darkly that unless he had another basin of gruel a day, he was afraid he might some night happen to eat the boy who slept next him. He had a wild, hungry, eye; and they implicitly believed him. A council was held; lots were cast who should walk up to the master, and ask for more, and it fell to Oliver Twist.

The evening arrived; the boys took their places. The gruel was served out, and a long grace was said. The gruel disappeared; the boys whispered each other, and winked at Oliver; while his next neighbours nudged him. Child as he was, he was desperate with hunger, and reckless with misery. He rose and advancing to the master, basin and spoon in hand, said, somewhat alarmed at his own temerity:

"Please, sir, I want some more!"

The master was a fat, healthy man; but he turned very pale. He gazed in stupified astonishment on the small rebel for some seconds, and then clung for support to the copper. The assistants were paralysed with wonder; the boys with fear.

"What?" said the master at length, in a faint voice.

"Please, sir," replied Oliver, "I want some more."

The master aimed a blow at Oliver's head with the ladle; pinioned him in his arms; and shrieked for the beadle, and when that gentleman appeared, an animated discussion took place. Oliver was ordered into instant confinement; and a bill was next morning pasted on the outside of the gate, offering a reward of five pounds to any body who would take Oliver Twist off the hands of the parish. In other words, five pounds, and Oliver Twist were offered to any man or woman who wanted an apprentice to any trade, business, or calling.

Mr. Sowerberry, the parish undertaker, finally applied for the prize, and carried Oliver away with him, which, for the poor boy, was a matter of falling from the frying pan into the fire, and in his short career as undertaker's assistant he even sighed for the workhouse, — miserable as his life there had been. At the undertaker's, Oliver's bed was in the shop. The atmosphere seemed tainted with the smell of coffins. The recess behind the counter in which his mattress was thrust, looked like a grave. His food was broken bits left from the meals of others, and his constant companion was an older boy, Noah Claypole, who, although a charity boy himself, was not a workhouse orphan, and therefore considered himself in a position above Oliver. He made Oliver's days hideous with his abuse, which the younger boy bore as quietly as he could, until the day when Noah made a sneering remark about Oliver's dead mother. That was too much. Crimson with fury, Oliver started up, seized Noah by the throat, shook him till his teeth chattered, and then with one heavy blow, felled him to the ground.

This brought about a violent scene, for Noah accused Oliver of attempting to murder him, and Mrs. Sowerberry, the maid, and the beadle, — who had been hastily summoned, — agreed that Oliver was a hardened wretch, only fit for confinement, and he was accordingly placed in the cellar, till the undertaker came in, when he was dragged out again to have the story retold. To do Mr. Sowerberry justice, he would have been kindly disposed towards Oliver, but for the prejudice of his wife against the boy. However, to satisfy her, he gave Oliver a sound beating, and shut him up in the back kitchen until night, when, amidst the jeers and pointings of Noah and Mrs. Sowerberry, he was ordered up-stairs to his dismal bed.

It was then, alone, in the silence of the gloomy workshop,

that Oliver gave way to his feelings, wept bitterly, and resolved no longer to bear such treatment. Softly he undid the fastenings of the door, and looked abroad. It was a cold night. The stars seemed, to the boy's eyes, farther from the earth than he had ever seen them before; there was no wind; and the sombre shadows looked sepulchral and death-like, from being so still. He softly reclosed the door, and having availed himself of the expiring light of the candle to tie up in a handkerchief the few articles of wearing apparel he had, sat himself down to wait for morning.

With the first ray of light, Oliver arose, and again unbarred the door. One timid look around, — one minute's pause of hesitation, — he had closed it behind him.

He looked to the right, and to the left, uncertain whither to fly. He remembered to have seen the waggons, as they went out, toiling up the hill, so he took the same route; and arriving at a footpath which he knew led out into the road, struck into it, and walked quickly on.

For seven long days he tramped in the direction of London, tasting nothing but such scraps of meals as he could beg from the occasional cottages by the roadside. On the seventh morning he limped slowly into the little town of Barnet, and as he was resting for a few moments on the steps of a public-house, a boy crossed over, and walking close to him, said,

"Hullo! my covey! What's the row?"

The boy who addressed this inquiry to the young wayfarer, was about his own age: but one of the queerest looking boys that Oliver had ever seen. He was a snub-nosed, flat-browed, common-faced boy enough; and as dirty a juvenile as one would wish to see; but he had about him all the airs and manners of a man. He was short, with bow-legs, and little, sharp, ugly, eyes. His hat was stuck on the top of

his head, and he wore a man's coat that reached nearly to his heels.

"Hullo, my covey! What's the row?" said this strange young gentleman to Oliver.

"I am very hungry and tired," replied Oliver; the tears standing in his eyes as he spoke. "I have walked a long way. I have been walking these seven days."

"Going to London?" inquired the strange boy.

"Yes."

"Got any lodgings?"

"No."

"Money?"

"No."

The strange boy whistled; and put his arms into his pockets.

"Do you live in London?" inquired Oliver.

"Yes, I do when I'm at home," replied the boy. "I suppose you want some place to sleep in to-night, don't you?"

Upon Oliver answering in the affirmative, the strange boy, whose name was Jack Dawkins, said, "I've got to be in London to-night; and I know a 'spectable old genelman as lives there, wot'll give you lodgings for nothink, and never ask for the change—that is, if any genelman he knows interduces you."

This offer of shelter was too tempting to be resisted, and Oliver trudged off with his new friend. Into the city they passed, and through the worst and darkest streets, the sight of which filled Oliver with alarm. At length they reached the door of a house, which Jack entered, drawing Oliver after him, into its dark passage-way, and closing the door after them.

Oliver, groping his way with one hand, and having the other firmly grasped by his companion, ascended with much difficulty the dark and broken stairs, which his conductor

mounted with an expedition that showed he was well acquainted with them. He threw open the door of a back-room and drew Oliver in after him.

The walls and ceiling of the room were perfectly black with age and dirt. There was a clothes-horse, over which a great number of silk handkerchiefs were hanging; and a deal table before the fire; upon which were a candle, stuck in a ginger-beer bottle, two or three pewter pots, a loaf and butter, and a plate. In a frying pan, which was on the fire, some sausages were cooking, and standing over them, with a toasting-fork in his hand, was a very old shrivelled Jew, whose villanous-looking and repulsive face was obscured by a quantity of matted red hair.

Several rough beds, made of old sacks, were huddled side by side on the floor. Seated round the table were four or five boys, none older than Jack Dawkins, familiarly called the Dodger. The boys all crowded about their associate, as he whispered a few words to the Jew; and then they turned round and grinned at Oliver. So did the Jew himself, toasting-fork in hand.

"This is him, Fagin," said Jack Dawkins; "my friend Oliver Twist."

The Jew, making a low bow to Oliver, took him by the hand, and hoped he should have the honour of his intimate acquaintance. Upon this the young gentlemen came round him, and shook his hand very hard, especially the one in which he held his little bundle.

"We are very glad to see you, Oliver, very," said the Jew. "Dodger take off the sausages; and draw a tub near the fire for Oliver. Ah, you're a-staring at the pocket-handkerchiefs! eh, my dear? There are a good many of 'em, ain't there? We've just looked 'em out ready for the wash; that's all, Oliver, that's all. Ha! ha! ha!"

The latter part of this speech was hailed by a boisterous

shout from the boys, who, Oliver found, were all pupils of the merry old gentleman. In the midst of which they went to supper.

Oliver ate his share, and the Jew then mixed him a glass of hot gin and water, telling him he must drink it off directly because another gentleman wanted the tumbler. Oliver did as he was desired. Immediately afterwards, he felt himself gently lifted on to one of the sacks; and then he sunk into a deep sleep.

It was late next morning when Oliver awoke, from a sound, long sleep. There was no other person in the room but the old Jew, who was boiling some coffee in a saucepan for breakfast, and whistling softly to himself as he stirred it. He would stop every now and then to listen when there was the least noise below; and, when he had satisfied himself, he would go on, whistling and stirring again, as before.

When the coffee was done, the Jew drew the saucepan to the hob, then he turned and looked at Oliver, and called him by name, but the boy did not answer, and was to all appearances asleep. After satisfying himself upon this head, the Jew stepped gently to the door, which he fastened. He then drew forth, as it seemed to Oliver, from some trap in the floor a small box, which he placed carefully on the table. His eyes glistened as he raised the lid, and looked in. Dragging an old chair to the table, he sat down, and took from it a magnificent gold watch, sparkling with jewels.

At least half a dozen more were severally drawn forth from the same box, besides rings, brooches, bracelets, and other articles of jewellery, of such magnificent materials, and costly workmanship, that Oliver had no idea, even of their names.

At length the bright, dark eyes of the Jew, which had been staring vacantly before him, fell on Oliver's face; the

boy's eyes were fixed on his in mute curiosity; and, although the recognition was only for an instant, — it was enough to show the man that he had been observed. He closed the lid of the box with a loud crash; and, laying his hand on a bread knife which was on the table, started furiously up.

"What 's that?" said the Jew. "What do you watch me for? Why are you awake? What have you seen? Speak out, boy! Quick — quick! for your life!"

"I was n't able to sleep any longer, sir," replied Oliver meekly. "I am very sorry if I have disturbed you, sir."

"You were not awake an hour ago?" said the Jew, scowling fiercely.

"No! No indeed!" replied Oliver.

"Are you sure?" cried the Jew, with a still fiercer look than before, and a threatening attitude.

"Upon my word I was not, sir," replied Oliver, earnestly. "I was not, indeed, sir."

"Tush, tush, my dear!" said the Jew, abruptly resuming his old manner. "Of course I know that, my dear, I only tried to frighten you. You 're a brave boy. Ha! ha! you 're a brave boy, Oliver!"

The Jew rubbed his hands with a chuckle, but glanced uneasily at the box, notwithstanding.

"Did you see any of these pretty things, my dear?" said the Jew.

"Yes, sir," replied Oliver.

"Ah!" said Fagin, turning rather pale. "They — they 're mine, Oliver; my little property. All I have to live upon in my old age. The folks call me a miser, my dear. Only a miser; that 's all."

Oliver thought the old gentleman must be a decided miser to live in such a dirty place, with so many watches; but thinking that perhaps his fondness for the Dodger and the other

boys, cost him a good deal of money, he only cast a deferential look at the Jew, and asked if he might get up. Permission being granted him, he got up, walked across the room, and stooped for an instant to raise the water-pitcher. When he turned his head, the box was gone.

Presently the Dodger returned with a friend, Charley Bates, and the four sat down to a breakfast of coffee, and some hot rolls, and ham, which the Dodger had brought home in the crown of his hat.

"Well," said the Jew, "I hope you've been at work this morning, my dears?"

"Hard," replied the Dodger.

"As Nails," added Charley Bates.

"Good boys, good boys!" said the Jew. "What have *you* got, Dodger?"

"A couple of pocket-books," replied the young gentleman.

"Lined?" inquired the Jew, with eagerness.

"Pretty well," replied the Dodger, producing two pocket-books.

"And what have you got, my dear?" said Fagin to Charley Bates.

"Wipes," replied Master Bates; at the same time producing four pocket-handkerchiefs.

"Well," said the Jew, inspecting them closely; "they're very good ones, very. You haven't marked them well, though, Charley; so the marks shall be picked out with a needle, and we'll teach Oliver how to do it. Shall us, Oliver, eh?"

"If you please, sir," said Oliver.

"You'd like to be able to make pocket-handkerchiefs as easy as Charley Bates, would n't you, my dear?" said the Jew.

"Very much indeed, if you'll teach me, sir," replied Oliver.

Master Bates saw something so exquisitely ludicrous in this reply, that he burst into a laugh; which laugh, meeting the coffee he was drinking, and carrying it down some wrong channel, very nearly terminated in his suffocation.

"He is so jolly green!" said Charley, when he recovered, as an apology to the company for his unpolite behaviour.

When the breakfast was cleared away, the merry old gentleman and the two boys played at a very curious and uncommon game, which was performed in this way. Fagin, placing a snuff-box in one pocket of his trousers, a note-case in the other, and a watch in his waistcoat pocket, with a guard-chain round his neck, and sticking a mock diamond pin in his shirt, buttoned his coat tight round him, and putting his spectacle-case and handkerchief in his pockets, trotted up and down with a stick, in imitation of the manner in which old gentlemen walk about the streets. Sometimes he stopped at the fire-place, and sometimes at the door, making believe that he was staring with all his might into shop windows. At such times he would look constantly round him, for fear of thieves, and would keep slapping all his pockets in turn, to see that he had n't lost anything, in such a very funny and natural manner, that Oliver laughed till the tears ran down his face.

All this time, the two boys followed him closely about; getting out of his sight so nimbly, that it was impossible to follow their motions. At last, the Dodger trod upon his toes accidentally, while Charley Bates stumbled up against him behind; and in that one moment they took from him, with the most extraordinary rapidity, snuff-box, note-case, watch-guard, chain, shirt-pin, pocket-handkerchief — even the spectacle-case. If the old gentleman felt a hand in one of his pockets, he cried out where it was; and then the game began all over again.

When this game had been played a great many times, a couple of young women came in; one of whom was named Bet, and the other Nancy, and afterwards Oliver discovered that they also were pupils of Fagin's as well as the boys.

Later the young people went out, leaving Oliver alone with the Jew, who was pacing up and down the room.

"Is my handkerchief hanging out of my pocket, my dear?" said the Jew, stopping short, in front of Oliver.

"Yes sir," said Oliver.

"See if you can take it out, without my feeling it: as you saw them do when we were at play."

Oliver held up the bottom of the pocket with one hand, as he had seen the Dodger hold it, and drew the handkerchief lightly out of it with the other.

"Is it gone?" cried the Jew.

"Here it is, sir," said Oliver, showing it in his hand.

"You're a clever boy, my dear," said the playful old gentleman, patting Oliver on the head approvingly. "I never saw a sharper lad. Here's a shilling for you. If you go on in this way, you'll be the greatest man of the time. And now come here, and I'll show you how to take the marks out of the handkerchiefs."

Oliver wondered what picking the old gentleman's pocket in play, had to do with his chances of being a great man. But, thinking that the Jew, being so much his senior, must know best, he followed him quietly to the table, and was soon deeply involved in his new study.

For many days Oliver remained in the Jew's room, picking marks out of the pocket-handkerchiefs. But at length, he began to languish, and entreated Fagin to allow him to go out to work with his two companions. So, one morning, he obtained permission to go out, under the guardianship of Charley Bates and the Dodger.

The three boys sallied out; the Dodger with his coat-sleeves tucked up, and his hat cocked as usual; Master Bates sauntering along with his hands in his pockets; and Oliver between them, wondering where they were going, and what branch of manufacture he would be instructed in, first.

They were just emerging from a narrow court, when the Dodger made a sudden stop; and, laying his finger on his lip, drew his companions back again with the greatest caution.

"What's the matter?" demanded Oliver.

"Hush!" replied the Dodger. "Do you see that old cove at the book-stall?"

"The old gentleman over the way?" said Oliver. "Yes, I see him."

"He 'll do," said the Dodger.

"A prime plant," observed Master Charley Bates.

Oliver looked from one to the other, with the greatest surprise; but could not ask any questions, for the two boys walked stealthily across the road, and slunk close behind the old gentleman. Oliver walked a few paces behind them, looking on in silent amazement.

The old gentleman had taken up a book from the stall; and there he stood: reading away, perfectly absorbed, and saw not the book-stall, nor the street, nor the boys, nor anything but the book itself. What was Oliver's horror and alarm to see the Dodger plunge his hand into the old gentleman's pocket, and draw from thence a handkerchief! To see him hand the same to Charley Bates; and finally to behold them, both, running away round the corner at full speed!

In an instant the whole mystery of the handkerchiefs, and the watches, and the jewels, and the Jew, rushed upon the boy's mind. He stood, for a moment, with the blood tingling through all his veins from terror; then, confused and frightened, he took to his heels.

In the very instant when Oliver began to run, the old gentleman, putting his hand to his pocket, and missing his handkerchief, turned sharp round. Seeing the boy scudding away at such a rapid pace, he very naturally concluded him to be the depredator, and, shouting "Stop thief!" with all his might, made off after him, book in hand. The Dodger and Master Bates, who had merely retired into the first doorway round the corner, no sooner heard the cry, and saw Oliver running, than they issued forth with great promptitude; and, shouting, "Stop thief! Stop thief!" too, joined in the pursuit like good citizens.

"Stop thief!" The cry is taken up by a hundred voices; the tradesman, the carman, the butcher, the baker, the milkman, the school-boy, follow in hot pursuit. Away they run, pell-mell, helter-skelter, slap-dash: tearing, yelling: screaming, knocking down the passengers as they turn the corners, splashing through the mud, and rattling along the pavements, following after the wretched, breathless, panting child, gaining upon him every instant. Stopped at last! A clever blow! He is down upon the pavement, covered with mud and dust, looking wildly round upon the heap of faces that surround him.

"Yes," said the old gentleman, "I am afraid that is the boy. Poor fellow! he has hurt himself!"

Just then a police officer appeared and dragged the half fainting boy off, the old gentleman walking beside him, Oliver protesting his innocence as they went. At the police station Oliver was searched in vain, and then locked in a cell for a time, while the old gentleman sat outside waiting, and read his book. Presently the boy was brought out before the Magistrate; and the policeman and the old gentleman preferred their charges against him. While the case was proceeding, Oliver fell to the floor in a fainting fit, and

as he lay there the Magistrate uttered his penance, "He stands committed for three months of hard labour. Clear the office!" A couple of men were about to carry the insensible boy to his cell, when an elderly man rushed hastily into the office. "Stop, stop!" he said. "Don't take him away! I saw it all. I keep the book-stall. I saw three boys loitering on the opposite side of the way when this gentleman was reading. The robbery was committed by another boy. I saw it done; and I saw that this boy was perfectly amazed and stupified by it!"

Having by this time recovered a little breath, the book-stall keeper proceeded to relate in a more coherent manner the exact circumstances of the robbery, in consequence of which explanation Oliver Twist was discharged, and carried off, still white and faint, in a coach, by the kind-hearted old gentleman whose name was Brownlow, who seemed to feel himself responsible for the boy's condition, and resolved to have him cared for in his own home.

After Charley Bates and the Dodger had seen Oliver dragged away by the police officer, they scoured off with great rapidity. Coming to a halt Master Bates burst into an uncontrollable fit of laughter.

"What's the matter?" inquired the Dodger.

"I can't help it," said Charley, "I can't help it! To see him splitting away at that pace, and cutting round the corners, and knocking up against the posts, and starting on again as if he was made of iron, and me with the wipe in my pocket, singing out arter him — oh, my eye!" The vivid imagination of Master Bates presented the scene before him in too strong colours, and he rolled upon a door-step and laughed louder than before.

"What'll Fagin say?" inquired the Dodger, and the question sobered Master Bates at once, as both boys stood

in great dread of the Jew. And their worst fears were realised. Fagin was livid with rage at the loss of his promising pupil, as well as fearful of the disclosures he might make. After long consultation on the subject, it was agreed by the band that Nancy was to go to the police station in a disguised dress, to find out what had been done with Oliver, for whom she was to search as her "dear little lost brother."

Meanwhile Oliver lay for many days burning with fever and unconscious of his surroundings, in the quietly comfortable home of Mr. Brownlow at Pentonville. At length, weak, and thin, and pallid, he awoke from what seemed a dream, and found himself being nursed by Mrs. Bedwin, Mr. Brownlow's motherly old house-keeper, and visited constantly by the doctor. Gradually he grew stronger, and soon could sit up a little. Those were happy, peaceful days of his recovery, the only happy ones he had ever known. Everybody was so kind and gentle that it seemed like Heaven itself, as he sat by the fireside in the house-keeper's room. On the wall hung a portrait of a beautiful, mild, lady with sorrowful eyes, of which Oliver was the living copy. Every feature was the same — to Mr. Brownlow's intense astonishment, as he gazed from it to Oliver.

Later, Oliver heard the history of the portrait and his own connection with it.

When he was strong enough to put his clothes on, Mr. Brownlow caused a complete new suit, and a new cap, and a new pair of shoes, to be provided for him. Oliver gave his old clothes to one of the servants who had been kind to him, and she sold them to a Jew who came to the house.

One evening Mr. Brownlow sent up word to have Oliver come down into his study and see him for a little while, — so Mrs. Bedwin helped him to prepare himself, and although

there was not even time to crimp the little frill that bordered his shirt-collar, he looked so delicate and handsome, that she surveyed him with great complacency.

Mr. Brownlow was reading, but when he saw Oliver, he pushed the book away, and told him to come near, and sit down, which Oliver did. Then the old gentleman began to talk kindly of what Oliver's future was to be. Instantly the boy became pallid with fright, and implored Mr. Brownlow to let him stay with him, as a servant, as anything, only not to send him out into the streets again, and the old gentleman, touched by the appeal, assured the boy that unless he should deceive him, he would be his faithful friend. He then asked Oliver to relate the whole story of his life, which he was beginning to do when an old friend of Mr. Brownlow's — a Mr. Grimwig, — entered.

He was an eccentric old man, and was loud in his exclamations of distrust in this boy whom Mr. Brownlow was harbouring.

"I'll answer for that boy's truth with my life!" said Mr. Brownlow, knocking the table.

"And I for his falsehood with my head!" rejoined Mr. Grimwig, knocking the table also.

"We shall see!" said Mr. Brownlow, checking his rising anger.

"We will!" said Mr. Grimwig, with a provoking smile; "we will."

Just then Mrs. Bedwin brought in some books which had been bought of the identical book stall-keeper who has already figured in this history. Mr. Brownlow was greatly disturbed that the boy who brought them had not waited, as there were some other books to be returned.

"Send Oliver with them," suggested Mr. Grimwig, "he will be sure to deliver them safely, you know!"

"Yes; do let me take them, if you please, sir," said Oliver "I'll run all the way, sir."

Mr. Brownlow was about to refuse to have Oliver go out, when Mr. Grimwig's malicious cough made him change his mind, and let the boy go.

"You are to say," said Mr. Brownlow, "that you have brought those books back; and that you have come to pay the four pound ten I owe him. This is a five-pound note, so you will have to bring me back ten shilling change."

"I won't be ten minutes, sir," replied Oliver, eagerly, as with a respectful bow he left the room. Mrs. Bedwin watched him out of sight exclaiming, "Bless his sweet face!" — while Oliver looked gaily round, and nodded before he turned the corner.

Then Mr. Brownlow drew out his watch and waited, while Mr. Grimwig asserted that the boy would never be back. "He has a new suit of clothes on his back; a set of valuable books under his arm; and a five-pound note in his pocket. He'll join his old friends the thieves, and laugh at you. If ever that boy returns to this house, sir," said Mr. Grimwig, "I'll eat my head!"

It grew so dark that the figures on the dial-plate were scarcely discernible. The gas lamps were lighted; Mrs. Bedwin was waiting anxiously at the open door; the servant had run up the street twenty times to see if there were any traces of Oliver; and still the two old gentlemen sat, perseveringly, in the dark parlour, with the watch between them, waiting — but Oliver did not come.

He meanwhile, had walked along, on his way to the bookstall, thinking how happy and contented he ought to feel, when he was startled by a young woman screaming out very loud, "Oh, my dear brother!" — and then he was stopped by having a pair of arms thrown tight round his neck.

"Don't!" cried Oliver, struggling. "Let go of me. Who is it? What are you stopping me for?"

"Oh my gracious!" said the young woman, "I've found him! Oh you naughty boy, to make me suffer sich distress on your account! Come home, dear, come!" With these and more incoherent exclamations, the young woman burst out crying, and told the onlookers that Oliver was her brother, who had run away from his respectable parents a month ago, joined a gang of thieves and almost broke his mother's heart, — to which Oliver, greatly alarmed, replied that he was an orphan, had no sister, and lived at Pentonville. Then, catching sight of the woman's face for the first time, he cried, — "Why, it's Nancy!"

"You see he knows me!" cried Nancy. "Make him come home, there's good people, or he'll kill his dear mother and father, and break my heart!" With this a man who was Nancy's accomplice, Bill Sikes by name, came to the rescue, tore the volumes from Oliver's grasp, and struck him on the head. Weak still, and stupified by the suddenness of the attack, overpowered and helpless, what could one poor child do? Darkness had set in; it was a low neighbourhood; no help was near — resistance was useless. In another moment he was dragged into a labyrinth of dark narrow courts: and was forced along them, at a pace which rendered the few cries he dared to give utterance to, unintelligible.

At length they turned into a very filthy street, and stopped at an apparently untenanted house into which Bill Sikes and Nancy led Oliver, and there, were his old friends, Charley Bates, the Dodger, and Fagin.

They greeted Oliver with cheers, and at once rifled his pockets of the five-pound note, and relieved him of the books, — although Oliver pleaded that the books and money be sent back to Mr. Brownlow. When he found that all

pleading and resistance were useless, he jumped suddenly to his feet and tore wildly from the room, uttering shrieks for help which made the bare old house echo to the roof, and then attempted to dart through the door, opened for a moment, but he was instantly caught, while Sikes' dog would have sprung upon him, except for Nancy's intervention. She was struck with Oliver's pallor and great grief and tried to shield him from violence. But it was of little avail. He was beaten by the Jew, and then led off by Master Bates into an adjacent kitchen to go to bed. His new clothes were taken from him and he was given the identical old suit which he had so congratulated himself upon leaving off at Mr. Brownlow's, and the accidental display of which to Fagin, by the Jew who purchased them, had been the first clue to Oliver's whereabouts.

For a week or so the boy was kept locked up, but after that the Jew left him at liberty to wander about the house; which was a weird, ghostlike place, with the mouldering shutters fast closed, and no evidence from outside that it sheltered human creatures. Oliver was constantly with Charley Bates and the Dodger, who played the old game with the Jew every day. At times Fagin entertained the boys with stories of robberies he had committed in his younger days, which made Oliver laugh heartily, and show that he was amused in spite of his better feelings. In short, the wily old Jew had the boy in his toils, and hoped gradually to instil into his soul the poison which would blacken it and change its hue forever.

Meanwhile Fagin, Bill Sikes, and Nancy were arranging a plot in which poor Oliver was to play a notable part. One morning he found to his surprise, a pair of stout new shoes by his bedside, and at breakfast Fagin told him that he was to be taken to the residence of Bill Sikes that night,

but no reason for this was given. Fagin then left him and presently Nancy came in, looking pale and ill. She came from Sikes to take Oliver to him. Her countenance was agitated and she trembled.

"I have saved you from being ill-used once, and I will again; and I do now," she said, "for those who would have fetched you if I had not, would have been far more rough than me. Remember this, and don't let me suffer more for you just now. If I could help you, I would; but I have not the power. I have promised for your being quiet; if you are not, you will harm youself and perhaps be my death. Hush! Give me your hand! Make haste!"

Blowing out the light, she drew Oliver hastily after her, out, and into a hackney-cabriolet. The driver wanted no directions, but lashed his horse into full speed, and presently they were in a strange house. There, with Nancy and Sikes, Oliver remained until an early hour the next morning, when the three set out, whither or for what Oliver did not know, but before they started Sikes drew out a pistol, and holding it close to Oliver's temple said, "If you speak a word while you're out of doors, with me, except when I speak to you, that loading will be in your head without notice!" And Oliver did not doubt the statement.

In the gray dawn of a cheerless morning the trio started off, and by continual tramping, and an occasional lift from a carter reached a public house where they lingered for some hours, and then went on again until the next night. They turned into no house at Shepperton, as the weary boy had expected; but still kept walking on, in mud and darkness, until they came in sight of the lights of a town. Then they stopped for a time at a solitary, dilapidated house, where they were met by other men. The party then crossed a bridge and were soon in the little town of

Chertsey. There was nobody abroad. They had cleared the town as the church-bell struck two. After walking about a quarter of a mile, they stopped before a detached house surrounded by a wall: to the top of which one of the men, Toby Crackit, climbed in a twinkling.

"The boy next!" said Toby. "Hoist him up; I'll catch hold of him."

Before Oliver had time to look round, Sikes had caught him under the arms; and he and Toby were lying on the grass, on the other side of the wall. Sikes followed, and they stole towards the house. Now, for the first time Oliver realised that robbery, if not murder, was the object of the expedition. In vain he pleaded that they let him go, — he was answered only by oaths, while the robbers were busy opening a little window not far from the ground at the back of the house, which was just large enough to admit Oliver. Toby planted himself firmly with his head against the wall beneath the window, then Sikes, mounting upon him, put Oliver through the window with his feet first, and without leaving hold of his collar, planted him safely on the floor inside.

"Take this lantern," whispered Sikes, looking into the room, "You see the stairs afore you; go up softly and unfasten the street door."

Oliver, more dead than alive gasped out, "Yes." Sikes then advised him to take notice that he was within shot all the way; and that if he faltered, he would fall dead that instant.

"It's done in a minute," said Sikes. "Directly I leave go of you, do your work. Hark!"

"What's that?" whispered the other man.

"Nothing," said Sikes, — "*Now!*"

In the short time he had to collect his senses, Oliver had resolved that, whether he died in the attempt or not,

he would make one effort to dart up stairs and to alarm the family. Filled with this idea, he advanced at once, but stealthily.

"Come back!" suddenly cried Sikes aloud. "*Back! Back!*"

Scared by the sudden breaking of the stillness and by a loud cry which followed it, Oliver let his lantern fall and knew not whether to advance or fly. The cry was repeated — a light appeared — a vision of two terrified half-dressed men at the top of the stairs swam before his eyes — a flash — a smoke — a crash somewhere, — and he staggered back.

Sikes had disappeared for an instant; but he was up again, and had Oliver by the collar before the smoke had cleared away. He fired his pistol after the men, and dragged the boy up.

"Clasp your arm tighter," said Sikes, as he drew him through the window. "Give me a shawl here. They've hit him. Quick! How the boy bleeds!"

Then came the loud ringing of a bell, mingled with the noise of fire-arms, the shouts of men, and the sensation of being carried over uneven ground at a rapid pace. Then the noises grew confused in the distance; and the boy saw or heard no more. Bill Sikes had him on his back scudding like the wind. Oliver's head hung down, and he was deadly cold. The pursuers were close upon Sikes' heels. He dropped the boy in a ditch and fled.

Hours afterwards Oliver came to himself, and found his left arm rudely bandaged hung useless at his side. He was so weak that he could scarcely move. Trembling from cold and exhaustion he made an effort to stand upright, but fell back, groaning with pain. Then a creeping stupor came over him, warning him that if he lay there he must surely die. So he got upon his feet, and stumbling on, dizzy and

half unconscious, drew near to the very house which caused him to shudder with horror at the memory of last night's dreadful scene.

Within, in the kitchen all the servants were gathered round the fire discussing the attempted burglary. While Mr. Giles, the butler, was giving his version of the affair, there came a timid knock. They opened the door cautiously and beheld poor little Oliver Twist, speechless and exhausted, who raised his heavy eyes and mutely solicited their compassion. Instantly there was an outcry, and Oliver was seized by one leg and one arm, lugged into the hall, and laid on the floor. "Here he is!" bawled Giles up the staircase; "here's one of the thieves, ma'am! Here's a thief, miss! Wounded, miss. I shot him, miss; and Brittles held the light!" There was great confusion then, all the servants talking at once, but the sound of a sweet voice from above quelled the commotion. On learning that a wounded thief was lying in the house, the voice directed that he be instantly carried up-stairs to the room of Mr. Giles, and a doctor be summoned; and so for the second time in his short, tragic existence, Oliver fell into kind hands at a moment when all hope had left his breast. He was now in the home of Mrs. Maylie, a finely preserved, bright-eyed, elderly lady, and her fair young adopted niece, Rose.

The attempted burglary had greatly shocked them both, and the fact that one of the robbers was in the house added to their nervousness. So when Dr. Losberne came, and begged them to accompany him to the patient's room, they dreaded to comply with the request, but finally yielded to his demand. What was their astonishment when the bed-curtains were drawn aside, instead of a black-visaged ruffian, to see a mere child, worn with pain, and sunk into a deep sleep. His wounded arm bound and splintered up, was

crossed upon his breast. His head reclined upon the other arm, which was half hidden by his long hair, as it streamed over the pillow. The boy smiled in his sleep as at a pleasant dream, when Rose bent tenderly over him, while the older lady and the Doctor discussed the probability of the child's having been the tool of robbers. Fearing that the doctor might influence her aunt to send the boy away, Rose pleaded that he be kept and cared for; it was finally decided that when Oliver awoke he should be examined as to his past life, and if the result seemed satisfactory, he should remain. But not until evening was he able to be questioned. He then told them all his simple history. It was a solemn thing to hear the feeble voice of the sick child recounting a weary catalogue of evils and calamities which hard men had brought upon him, and his hearers were profoundly moved by the recital. His pillow was smoothed by gentle hands that night and he slept as sleep the calm and happy.

On the following day, officers who had heard of the burglary, and that a thief was prisoner in the Maylie house, came from London to arrest him, but Dr. Losberne and Mrs. Maylie shielded him, and their joint bail was accepted for the boy's appearance in court if it should ever be required.

With the Maylies Oliver remained, and thanks to their tender care, gradually throve and prospered, although it was long weeks before he was quite himself again. Many times he spoke to the two sweet ladies of his gratitude to them, saying that he only desired to serve them always. To this they responded that he should go with them to the country, and there could serve them in a hundred ways.

Only one cloud was on Oliver's sky. He longed to go to Mr. Brownlow and tell him the true story of his seeming ingratitude. So as soon as he was sufficiently recovered,

Dr. Losberne drove him out to the place where he said Mr. Brownlow resided. They hastened to the house, but alas! it was empty. There was a bill in the window, "To Let" and upon inquiring, they found that Mr. Brownlow, Mr. Grimwig, and Mrs. Bedwin had gone to the West Indies.

The disappointment was a cruel one, for all through his sickness Oliver had anticipated the delight of seeing his first benefactor, and clearing himself of guilt, but now that was impossible.

In a fortnight the Maylies went to the country, and Oliver, whose life had been spent in squalid crowds, seemed to enter on a new existence there. The sky and the balmy air, the woods and glistening water, the rose and honeysuckle, were each a daily joy to him. Every morning he went to a white-haired old gentleman who taught him to read better and to write, then he would walk and talk with Rose and Mrs. Maylie, and so three happy months glided away.

In the summer Rose was taken down with a terrible fever, and anxiety hung like a cloud over the cottage where she was so dear, but at length the danger passed and the loving hearts grew lighter again.

Meanwhile a man named Monks, — a friend of Fagin's — had by chance seen Oliver, had been strangely excited and angered at sight of him, and after carefully learning some details of the boy's history, had gone to the beadle at the workhouse where Oliver began life, and by dint of bribes, had extorted information concerning Oliver's mother, which only one person knew. Satisfied with what he learned, Monks conferred with Fagin, telling some facts about Oliver which caused Nancy, who happened to overhear them, to become terror-stricken.

As soon as she could, she stole away from her companions, out towards the West End of London, to a hotel where the

Maylies were then boarding, and which she had heard Monks mention. Nancy was such a ragged object that she found it difficult to have her name carried up to Rose Maylie, but at length she succeeded, and was ushered into the sweet young lady's presence, where she quickly related what she had come to tell. That Monks had accidentally seen Oliver, and found out where he was living, and with whom; — that a bargain had been struck with Fagin that he should have a certain sum of money if Oliver were brought back, and a still larger amount if the boy could be made a thief. Nancy then went on to tell that Monks spoke of Oliver as his young brother, and boasted that the proofs of the boy's identity lay at the bottom of the river — that he, Monks, had money which by right should have been shared with Oliver, and that his one desire was to take the boy's life.

These disclosures made Rose Maylie turn pale, and ask many questions, from which she discovered that Nancy's confession was actuated by a real liking for Oliver and a fierce hatred for the man Monks. Her tale finished, and refusing money, or help of any kind, Nancy went as swiftly as she had come, and when she left, Rose sank into a chair completely overcome by what she had heard.

Of course the matter was too serious to pass over, and the next day, as Rose was trying to decide upon a course of action, Oliver settled it for her, by rushing in with breathless haste, and exclaiming, "I have seen the gentleman — the gentleman who was so good to me — Mr. Brownlow!"

"Where?" asked Rose.

"Going into a house," replied Oliver. "And Giles asked, for me, whether he lived there, and they said he did. Look here," producing a scrap of paper, "here it is; here's where he lives — I 'm going there directly! OH, DEAR ME! DEAR ME! what shall I do when I come to hear him speak again!"

With her attention not a little distracted by these exclamations of joy, an idea came to Rose, and she determined upon turning this discovery to account.

"Quick!" she said, "tell them to fetch a hackney-coach, and be ready to go with me. I will take you to see Mr. Brownlow directly."

Oliver needed no urging and they were soon on their way to Craven Street. When they arrived, Rose left Oliver in the coach, and sending up her card, requested to see Mr. Brownlow on business. She was shown up stairs, and presented to Mr. Brownlow, an elderly gentleman of benevolent appearance, in a bottle-green coat, and with him was his friend, Mr. Grimwig. Rose began at once upon her errand, to the great amazement of the two old gentlemen. She related in a few natural words all that had befallen Oliver since he left Mr. Brownlow's house, concluding with the assurance that his only sorrow for many months had been the not being able to meet with his former benefactor and friend.

"Thank God!" said Mr. Brownlow. "This is great happiness to me; great happiness! But why not have brought him?"

"He is waiting in a coach at the door," replied Rose.

"At this door!" cried Mr. Brownlow. With which he hurried down the stairs, without another word, and came back with Oliver. Then Mrs. Bedwin was sent for. "God be good to me!" she cried, embracing him; "it is my innocent boy! He would come back — I knew he would! How well he looks, and how like a gentleman's son he is dressed again! Where have you been, this long, long while?"

Running on thus, — now holding Oliver from her, now clasping him to her and passing her fingers through his hair, the good soul laughed and wept upon his neck by turns.

Leaving Oliver with her, Mr. Brownlow led Rose into another room, by her request, and she narrated her interview with Nancy, which occasioned Mr. Brownlow no small amount of perplexity and surprise. After a long consultation they decided to take Mrs. Maylie and Dr. Losberne into their confidence, also Mr. Grimwig, thus forming a committee for the purpose of guarding the young lad from further entanglement in the plots of villains.

Through Nancy, with whom Rose had another interview, the man Monks was tracked, and finally captured by Mr. Brownlow, who to his sorrow, found that the villain was the erring son of his oldest friend, and his name of Monks only an assumed one. Facing him in a room of his own house, to which Monks had been brought, — Mr. Brownlow charged the man with one crime after another.

The father of Monks had two children who were half brothers, Monks and Oliver Twist. The father died suddenly, leaving in Mr. Brownlow's home the portrait of Oliver's mother, which was hanging in the house-keeper's room. The striking likeness between this portrait and Oliver had led Mr. Brownlow to recognise the boy as the child of his dear old friend. Then, just when he had determined to adopt Oliver, the boy had disappeared, and all efforts to find him had proved unavailing. Mr. Brownlow knew that, although the mother and father were dead, the elder brother was alive, and at once commenced a search for him. Now he had discovered him in the man Monks, the friend of thieves and murderers, and by a chance clue he found also that there had been a will, dividing the property between the two brothers. That will had been destroyed, together with all proofs of Oliver's parentage, so that Monks might have the entire property. Fearing discovery, Monks had bargained with Fagin to keep the child a thief or to kill him outright.

This revelation of his crime in all its terrible details, told in clear cutting tones by Mr. Brownlow, while his eyes never left the man's face, overwhelmed the coward Monks. He stood convicted, and confessed his guilt.

Then, because the man was son of his old friend, Mr. Brownlow was merciful.

"Will you set your hand to a statement of truth and facts, and repeat it before witnesses?" he asked.

"That I promise," said Monks.

"Remain quietly here until such a document is drawn up, and proceed with me to such a place as I may deem advisable, to attest it?"

To this also Monks agreed.

"You must do more than that," said Mr. Brownlow; "Make restitution to Oliver. You have not forgotten the provisions of the will. Carry them into execution so far as your brother is concerned, and then go where you please. In this world you need meet no more."

To this also, at length Monks gave fearing assent.

A few days later Oliver found himself in a travelling carriage rolling fast towards his native town, with the Maylies, Mrs. Bedwin, Dr. Losberne, and Mr. Grimwig, while Mr. Brownlow followed in a post-chaise with Monks.

Oliver was much excited, for he had been told of the disclosures of Monks, which, together with journeying over a road which he had last travelled on foot, a poor houseless, wandering boy, without a friend, or a roof to shelter his head, caused his heart to beat violently and his breath to come in quick gasps.

"See there, there!" he cried, "that's the stile I came over; there are the hedges I crept behind, for fear anyone should overtake me and force me back!"

As they approached the town, and drove through its

narrow streets, it became matter of no small difficulty to restrain the boy within reasonable bounds. There was the undertaker's just as it used to be, only less imposing in appearance than he remembered it. There was the workhouse, the dreary prison of his youthful days; there was the same lean porter standing at the gate. There was nearly everything as if he had left it but yesterday, and all his recent life had been a happy dream.

They drove at once to the hotel where Mr. Brownlow joined them with Monks, and there in the presence of the whole party, the wretched man made his full confession of guilt, and surrendered one half of the property — about three thousand pounds — to his half-brother, upon whom even as he spoke, he cast looks of hatred so violent that Oliver trembled. From some details of his confession it was also discovered that Rose Maylie, who was only an adopted niece of Mrs. Maylie, had been the sister of Oliver's mother, and was therefore the boy's aunt, the first blood relation, except Monks, that he had ever possessed.

"Not aunt," cried Oliver, throwing his arms about her neck, "I'll never call her *aunt*. Sister, my own, dear sister, that something taught my heart to love so dearly from the first, Rose! dear, darling Rose!" And in Rose's close embrace, the boy found compensation for all his past sadness.

The only link to his old life which remained was soon broken. Fagin had been captured too, sentenced to death, and was in prison awaiting the fulfilment of his doom. In his possession he had papers relating to Oliver's parentage, and the boy went with Mr. Brownlow to the prison to try to recover them. With Mr. Brownlow, Fagin was obstinately silent, but to Oliver he whispered where they could be found, and then begged and prayed the boy to help him escape justice, and

sent up cry after cry that rang in Oliver's ears for months afterwards.

But youth and sorrow are seldom companions for long, and our last glimpse of Oliver is of a boy as thoroughly happy as one often is. He is now the adopted son of the good Mr. Brownlow. Removing with him and Mrs. Bedwin to within a mile of the Maylies' home, Mr. Brownlow gratified the only remaining wish of Oliver's warm and earnest heart, and as the happy days go swiftly by, the past becomes the shadow of a dream.

Several times a year Mr. Grimwig visits in the neighbourhood, and it is a favourite joke for Mr. Brownlow to rally him on his old prophecy concerning Oliver, and to remind him of the night on which they sat with the watch between them awaiting his return. But Mr. Grimwig contends that he was right in the main, and in proof thereof remarks that Oliver *did not come back after all*, — which always calls forth a laugh on his side, and increases his good humour.

TOMMY TRADDLES

Tommy Traddles.

TOMMY TRADDLES

POOR Traddles! In a tight sky-blue suit that made his arms and legs like German sausages, or roly-poly puddings, and with his hair standing upright, giving him the expression of a fretful porcupine, he was the merriest and most miserable of all the boys at Mr. Creakle's school, called Salem House. I never think of him without a strange disposition to laugh, and yet with tears in my eyes.

He was always being caned — I think he was caned every day in the half-year I spent at Salem House, except one holiday Monday when he was only ruler'd on both hands — and was always going to write to his uncle about it, and never did. After laying his head on the desk for a little while, he would cheer up somehow, begin to laugh again, and draw skeletons all over his slate, before his eyes were dry. I used at first to wonder what comfort Traddles found in drawing skeletons; and for some time looked upon him as a sort of a hermit, who reminded himself by those symbols of mortality that caning could n't last for ever. But I believe he only did it because they were easy, and did n't want any features.

He was very honourable, Traddles was; and held it as a solemn duty in the boys to stand by one another. He suffered for this code of honour on several occasions. One evening we had a great spread up in our room after time for lights to be down, and we all got happily out of it but Traddles. He was too unfortunate even to come through a supper like anybody else. He was taken ill in the night — quite prostrate he was — in consequence of Crab; and after

being drugged to an extent which Demple (whose father was a doctor) said was enough to undermine a horse's constitution, received a caning and six chapters of Greek Testament for refusing to confess.

At another time, when Steerforth (who was the only parlour-boarder and the lion of the school) laughed in church, the Beadle, who thought the offender was Traddles, took *him* out. I see him now, going away in custody, despised by the congregation. He never said who was the real offender, although he smarted for it next day, and was imprisoned so many hours that he came forth with a whole churchyardful of skeletons swarming all over his Latin dictionary. But he had his reward. Steerforth said there was nothing of the sneak in Traddles, and we all felt that to be the highest praise.

On still a third occasion during my half-year at Salem House I have a vivid recollection of Traddles in distress; that time for siding with the down-trodden under-teacher, Mr. Mell, in a heated discussion between that gentleman and Steerforth.

The discussion took place on a Saturday which should have properly been a half-holiday, but as Mr. Creakle was indisposed, and the noise in the playground would have disturbed him; and the weather was not favourable for going out walking, we were ordered into school in the afternoon, and set some lighter tasks than usual; and Mr. Mell, a pale, delicately-built, little man, was detailed to keep us in order, which he tried in vain to accomplish.

Boys started in and out of their places, playing at puss-in-the-corner with other boys; there were laughing boys, singing boys, talking boys, dancing boys, howling boys; boys shuffled with their feet, boys whirled about him, grinning, making faces, mimicking him behind his back and before his eyes: mimicking his poverty, his boots, his coat, his mother, every thing be-

longing to him that they should have had consideration for.

"Silence!" cried Mr. Mell, suddenly rising up, and striking his desk with the book. "What does this mean! It's impossible to bear it. It's maddening. How can you do it to me, boys?"

The boys all stopped, some suddenly surprised, some half afraid, and some sorry perhaps.

Steerforth alone remained in his lounging position, hands in his pockets, and looked at Mr. Mell with his mouth shut up as if he were whistling, when Mr. Mell looked at him.

"Silence, Mr. Steerforth!" said Mr. Mell.

"Silence yourself," said Steerforth, turning red. "Whom are you talking to?"

"Sit down!" said Mr. Mell.

"Sit down yourself!" said Steerforth, "and mind your business."

There was a titter and some applause; but Mr. Mell was so white, that silence immediately succeeded.

"When you make use of your position of favouritism, here, sir," pursued Mr. Mell, with his lip trembling very much, "to insult a gentleman —"

"A what? — where is he?" said Steerforth.

Here somebody cried out, "Shame, J. Steerforth! Too bad!" It was Traddles; whom Mr. Mell instantly discomfited by bidding him to hold his tongue, —

"— to insult one who is not fortunate in life, sir, and who never gave you the least offence, and the many reasons for not insulting whom you are old enough and wise enough to understand," said Mr. Mell, with his lip trembling more and more, "you commit a mean and base action. You can sit down or stand up as you please, sir."

"I tell you what, Mr. Mell," said Steerforth, coming for-

ward, "once for all. When you take the liberty of calling me mean or base, or anything of that sort, you are an impudent beggar. You are always a beggar, you know; but when you do that, you are an impudent beggar."

Had Mr. Creakle not entered the room at that moment, there is no knowing what might have happened, for the highest pitch of excitement had been reached by combatants and lookers-on.

Both Steerforth and the under-teacher at once turned to Mr. Creakle, pouring out in his attentive ear the story of the burning wrong to which each had subjected the other, and the end of the whole affair was that Mr. Mell — having discovered that Mr. Creakle's veneration for money, and fear of offending his head-pupil, far outweighed any consideration for the teacher's feelings, — taking his flute and a few books from his desk, and leaving the key in it for his successor, went out of the school, with his property under his arm.

Mr. Creakle then made a speech, in which he thanked Steerforth for asserting (though perhaps too warmly) the independence and respectability of Salem House; and which he wound up by shaking hands with Steerforth; while we gave three cheers — I did not quite know what for, but I supposed for Steerforth, and joined in them, though I felt miserable. Mr. Creakle then caned Tommy Traddles for being discovered in tears, instead of cheers, and went away leaving us to ourselves.

Steerforth was very angry with Traddles, and said he was glad he had caught it. Poor Traddles, who had passed the stage of lying with his head upon the desk, and was relieving himself as usual with a burst of skeletons, said he did n't care. Mr. Mell was ill-used.

"Who has ill-used him, you girl?" said Steerforth.

"Why, you have," returned Traddles.

"What have I done?" said Steerforth.

"What have you done?" retorted Traddles. "Hurt his feelings and lost him his situation."

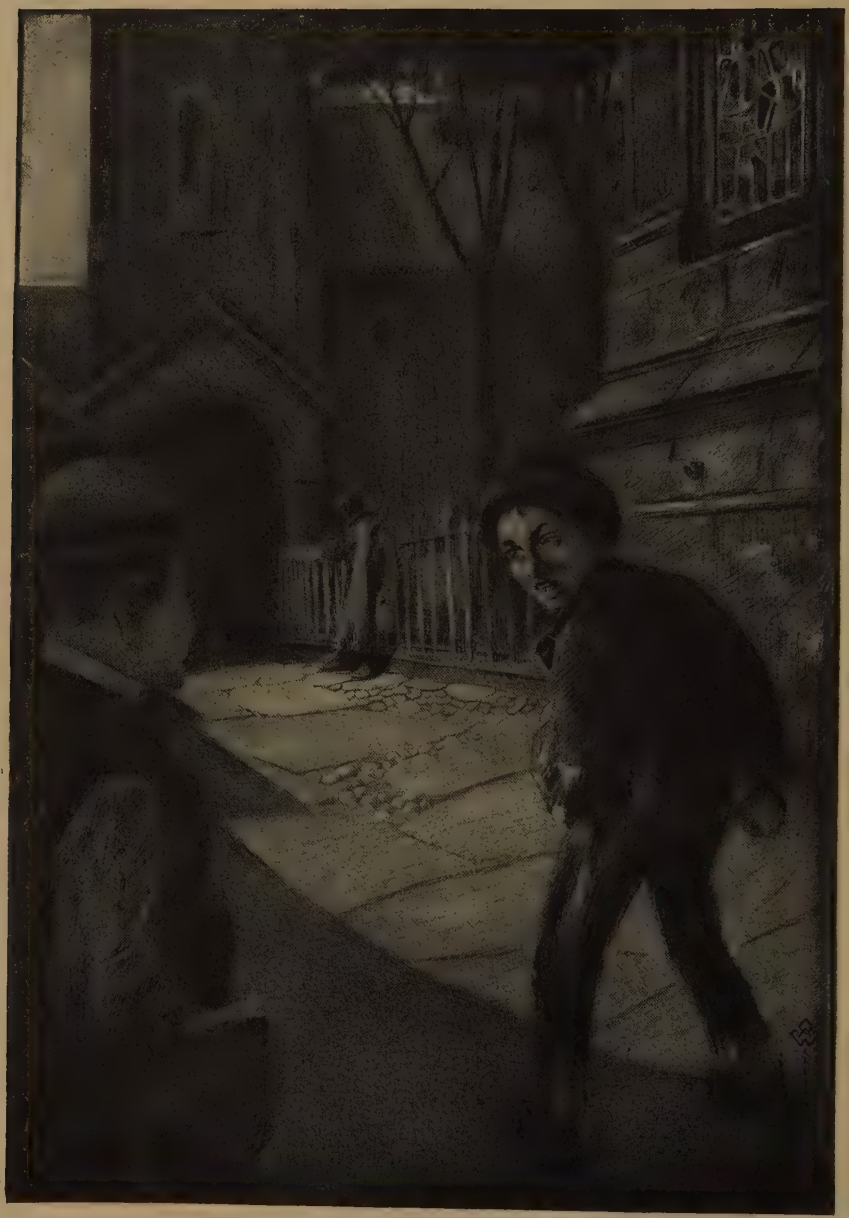
"His feelings!" repeated Steerforth, disdainfully. "His feelings will soon get the better of it, I'll be bound. His feelings are not like yours, Miss Traddles! As to his situation — which was a precious one, was n't it? — do you suppose I am not going to write home and take care that he gets some money?"

We all thought this intention very noble in Steerforth, whose mother was a rich widow, and, it was said, would do anything he asked her. We were all very glad to see Traddles so put down, and exalted Steerforth to the skies, and none of us appreciated at that time that our hero, J. Steerforth was very, very small indeed, as to character, in comparison to funny, unfortunate Tommy Traddles.

Years later, when Salem House was only a memory, and we were both men, Traddles and I met again. He had the same simple character and good temper as of old, and had, too, some of his old unlucky fortune, which clung to him always; yet notwithstanding that — as all of his trouble came from good-natured meddling with other people's affairs, for their benefit, I am not at all certain that I would not risk my chance of success — in the broadest meaning of that word — in the next world surely, if not in this, against all the Steerforths living, if I were Tommy Traddles.

Poor Traddles? — No, happy Traddles!

"DEPUTY"



DEPUTY.

"DEPUTY"

THEY were certainly the very oddest pair that ever the moon shone on, — Stony Durdles and the boy "Deputy."

Durdles was a stone-mason, from which occupation, undoubtedly, came his nickname "Stony," and Deputy was a hideous small boy hired by Durdles to pelt him home if he found him out too late at night, which duty the boy faithfully performed. In all the length and breadth of Cloisterham there was no more noted man than the stone-mason, Durdles, not, I regret to say, on account of his virtues, but rather because of his talent for remaining out late at night, and not being able to guide his steps homeward. There is a coarser term which might have been applied to this talent of Durdles, but we have nothing to do with that, here and now; what we desire is an introduction to the small boy who is Durdles's shadow.

One night, John Jasper, choir-master in Cloisterham Cathedral, on his way home through the Close, is brought to a standstill by the spectacle of Stony Durdles, dinner-bundle and all, leaning against the iron railing of the burial-ground, while a hideous small boy in rags flings stones at him, in the moonlight. Sometimes the stones hit him, and sometimes they miss him, but Durdles seems indifferent to either fortune. The hideous small boy, on the contrary, whenever he hits Durdles, blows a whistle of triumph through a jagged gap in the front of his mouth, where half his teeth are wanting; and whenever he misses him, yelps out, "Mulled agin!"

and tries to atone for the failure by taking a more correct and vicious aim.

"What are you doing to the man?" demands Jasper.

"Makin' a cock-shy of him," replies the hideous small boy.

"Give me those stones in your hand."

"Yes, I 'll give 'em you down your throat, if you come a ketchin' hold of me," says the small boy, shaking himself loose from Jasper's touch, and backing. "I 'll smash your eye if you don't look out!"

"What has the man done to you?"

"He won't go home."

"What is that to you?"

"He gives me a 'apenny to pelt him home if I ketches him out too late," says the boy. And then chants, like a little savage, half stumbling, and half dancing, among the rags and laces of his dilapidated boots, —

Widdy widdy wen!
I — ket — ches — 'im out — ar — ter ten,
Widdy widdy wy!
Then — 'E — don't — go — then — I shy,
Widdy widdy Wakecock warning!

— with a sweeping emphasis on the last word, and one more shot at Durdles. The bit of doggerel is evidently a sign which Durdles understands to mean either that he must prove himself able to stand clear of the shots, or betake himself immediately homeward, but he does not stir.

John Jasper crosses over to the railing where the Stony One is still profoundly meditating.

"Do you know this thing, this child?" he asks.

"Deputy," says Durdles, with a nod.

"Is that its — his — name?"

"Deputy," assents Durdles, whereupon the small boy feels called upon to speak for himself.

"I'm man-servant up at the Travellers Twopenny in Gas Works Garding," he explains. "All us man-servants at Travellers Lodgings is named Deputy, but I never pleads to no name, mind yer. When they says to me in the Lockup, 'What's your name?' I says to 'em 'find out.' Likewise when they says, 'What's your religion?' I says, 'find out'!" After delivering himself of this speech, he withdraws into the road and taking aim, he resumes:—

Widdy widdy wen!
I — ket — ches — 'im — out — ar — ter —

"Hold your hand!" cries Jasper, "and don't throw while I stand so near him, or I'll kill you! Come Durdles, let me walk home with you to-night. Shall I carry your bundle?"

"Not on any account," replies Durdles, adjusting it, and continuing to talk in a rambling way, as he and Jasper walk on together.

"This creature, Deputy, is behind us," says Jasper, looking back. "Is he to follow us?"

The relations between Durdles and Deputy seem to be of a capricious kind, for on Durdles turning to look at the boy, Deputy makes a wide circuit into the road and stands on the defensive.

"You never cried Widdy Warning before you begun to-night," cries Durdles, unexpectedly reminded of, or imagining an injury.

"Yer lie; I did," says Deputy, in his only polite form of contradiction, whereupon Durdles turns back again and forgets the offence as unexpectedly as he had recalled it, and says to Jasper, in reference to Deputy.

"Own brother, sir, to Peter, the Wild Boy! But I gave him an object in life."

"At which he takes aim?" Mr. Jasper suggests.

"That is it, sir," returns Durdles; "at which he takes aim. I took him in hand and gave him an object. What was he before? A destroyer. What work did he do? Nothing but destruction. What did he earn by it? Short terms in Cloisterham jail. Not a person, not a piece of property, not a winder, not a horse, nor a dog, nor a cat, nor a bird, nor a fowl, nor a pig, but that he stoned for want of an enlightened object. I put that enlightened object before him, and now he can turn his honest halfpenny by the three pennorth a week."

"I wonder he has no competitors."

"He has plenty, Mr. Jasper, but he stones 'em all away."

"He still keeps behind us," repeats Jasper, looking back, "is he to follow us?"

"We can't help going round by the Travellers Twopenny, if we go the short way, which is the back way," Durdles answers, "and we'll drop him there."

So they go on; Deputy attentive to every movement of the Stony One, until at length nearly at their destination Durdles whistles, and calls — "Holloa, you Deputy!"

"Widdy!" is Deputy's shrill response, standing off again.

"Catch that ha'penny. And don't let me see any more of you to-night, after we come to the Travellers Twopenny."

"Warning!" returns Deputy, having caught the halfpenny, and appearing by this mystic word to express his assent to the arrangement, then off he darts.

Such was the occupation of the small boy, Deputy, night after night, week after week, month after month, during the year when we catch a glimpse of him, and it is reasonable

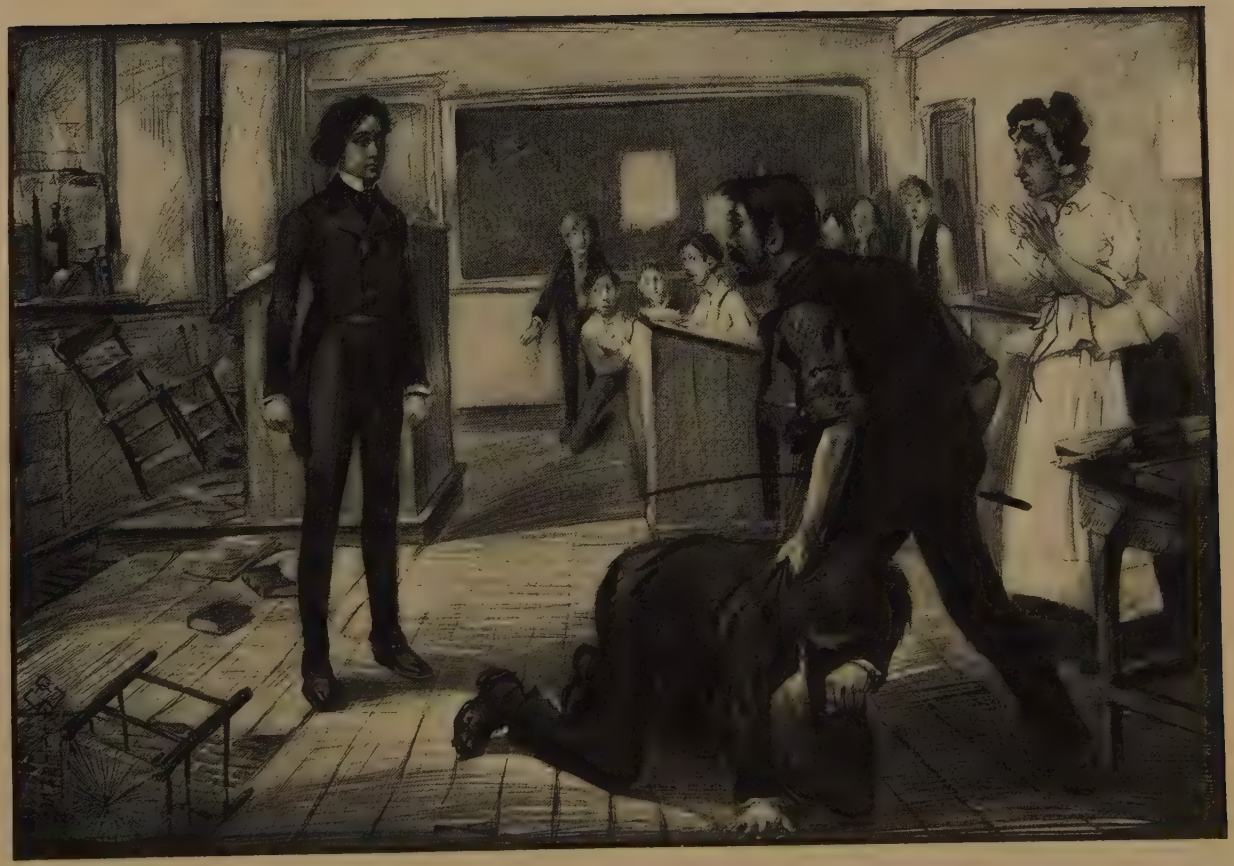
to suppose that the remainder of his life, after we lose sight of him was spent, in making a cock-shy of everything that came in his way, whether Durdles or inanimate objects. When he had nothing living to stone, I believe that he used to stone the dead, through the railing of the churchyard. He found this a relishing and piquing pursuit; firstly, because their resting place is supposed to be sacred, and, secondly, because the tall headstones are sufficiently like themselves to justify the delicious fancy that they are hurt when hit.

We have nothing told us to support the theory that Deputy's life ever changed in its routine of work, and I am sure you agree with me that there were never an odder pair than the two: Durdles, the stone-mason, and Deputy, his servant.

Perhaps you will be in Cloisterham at some not far distant time; if so, wander out at night in the old graveyard, when the moon is up, and in among the cathedral crypts, if you can gain access to them; and see if from some shadowy corner of lane or building does not start out before you the wraith of the hideous small boy, Deputy, eluding your touch, and chanting as he dances in front of you the old song which was the badge of his office as the keeper of Durdles, —

Widdy widdy wen!
I — ket — ches — 'im — out — ar — ter — ten,
Widdy widdy wy!
Then — 'E — don't — go — then — I — shy,
Widdy widdy Wakecock Warning!

DOTHEBOYS HALL



Nicholas Nickleby at Dotheboys Hall.

DOTHEBOYS HALL

"EDUCATION.— At Mr. Wackford Squeers's Academy, Dotheboys Hall, at the delightful village of Dotheboys, near Greta Bridge in Yorkshire, Youth are boarded, clothed, booked, furnished with pocket-money, provided with all necessaries, instructed in all languages living and dead, mathematics, orthography geometry, astronomy, trigonometry, the use of the globes, algebra, single stick (if required), writing, arithmetic, fortification, and every other branch of classical literature. Terms, twenty guineas per annum. No extras, no vacations, and diet unparalleled. Mr. Squeers is in town, and attends daily from one till four, at the Saracen's Head, Snow Hill. N. B. An able assistant wanted. Annual salary £5. A Master of Arts would be preferred."

When this advertisement in the "London Herald" came to the notice of Mr. Nicholas Nickleby, then in search of a position as teacher, it seemed to be the opening for which he was looking, and the next day he hastened to the Saracen's Head, Snow Hill, to have an interview with Mr. Wackford Squeers.

Mr. Squeers's appearance was not prepossessing. He had but one eye, and the popular prejudice runs in favour of two. The blank side of his face was much wrinkled and puckered up, which gave him a very sinister appearance, especially when he smiled. His hair was very flat and shiny, save at the ends, where it was brushed stiffly up from a low protruding forehead, which assorted well with his harsh voice

and coarse manner. He was about two or three and fifty, and a trifle below the middle size; he wore a white neckerchief and a suit of scholastic black; but his coat sleeves being a great deal too long, and his trousers a great deal too short, he appeared ill at ease in his clothes.

In the corner of the room with Mr. Squeers was a very small deal trunk, tied round with a scanty piece of cord, and on the trunk was perched — his lace-up half-boots and corduroy trousers dangling in the air — a diminutive boy, with his shoulders drawn up to his ears, and his hands planted on his knees, who glanced timidly at the schoolmaster from time to time, with evident dread and apprehension, and at last gave a violent sneeze.

"Halloa, sir!" growled the schoolmaster, turning round. "What's that, sir?"

"Nothing, please sir," said the little boy.

"Nothing, sir!" exclaimed Mr. Squeers.

"Please, sir, I sneezed," rejoined the boy, trembling till the little trunk shook under him.

"Oh! sneezed, did you?" retorted Mr. Squeers. "Then what did you say 'nothing' for, sir?"

In default of a better answer to this question, the little boy screwed a couple of knuckles into each of his eyes and began to cry; wherefore Mr. Squeers knocked him off the trunk with a blow on one side of his face, and knocked him on again with a blow on the other.

"Wait till I get you down into Yorkshire, my young gentleman," said Mr. Squeers, "and then I'll give you the rest. Will you hold that noise, sir?"

"Ye — ye — yes," sobbed the little boy, rubbing his face very hard.

"Then do so at once, sir," said Squeers. "Do you hear?"

As this admonition was accompanied with a threatening gesture, and uttered with a savage aspect, the little boy rubbed his face harder, and between alternately sniffing and choking, gave no further vent to his emotions.

"Mr. Squeers," said the waiter, at this juncture; "here 's a gentleman asking for you."

"Show the gentleman in, Richard," replied Mr. Squeers, in a soft voice. "Put your handkerchief in your pocket, you little scoundrel, or I 'll murder you when the gentleman goes."

The schoolmaster had scarcely uttered these words in a fierce whisper, when the stranger entered. Affecting not to see him, Mr. Squeers feigned to be intent upon mending a pen, and offering benevolent advice to his youthful pupil.

"My dear child," said Mr. Squeers, "All people have their trials. This early trial of yours that is fit to make your little heart burst, and your very eyes come out of your head with crying, what is it? Less than nothing. You are leaving your friends, but you will have a father in me, my dear, and a mother in Mrs. Squeers. At the delightful village of Dotheboys, near Greta Bridge in Yorkshire, where youth are boarded, clothed, booked, washed, furnished with pocket-money, provided with all necessaries — "

Here the waiting stranger interrupted with inquiries about sending his boys to Mr. Squeers, and before he and Mr. Squeers had finished their talk, Nicholas Nickleby entered. He briefly stated his desire for a position, his having seen Mr. Squeers's "Herald" advertisement, and, after more or less questioning and examination from the schoolmaster, Nicholas was engaged as assistant master for Dotheboys Hall, and it was settled that he was to go by coach with Mr. Squeers at eight o'clock the next morning.

When he arrived, punctually at the appointed hour, he found that learned gentleman sitting at breakfast, with five

little boys, whom he was to take down with him, ranged in a row on the opposite seat. Mr. Squeers had before him a small measure of coffee, a plate of hot toast, and a cold round of beef, but he was at that moment intent on preparing breakfast for the little boys.

"This is twopenn'orth of milk, is it waiter?" said Mr. Squeers.

"That 's twopenn'orth, sir," replied the waiter.

"What a rare article milk is, to be sure, in London!" said Mr. Squeers, with a sigh. "Just fill that mug up with luke-warm water, William, will you?"

"To the wery top, sir?" inquired the waiter. "Why, the milk will be drownded."

"Never you mind that," replied Mr. Squeers. "Serve it right for being so dear. You ordered that thick bread and butter for three, did you?"

"Coming directly, sir."

"You need n't hurry yourself," said Squeers, "there 's plenty of time. Conquer your passions, boys, and don't be eager after vittles." As he uttered this moral precept, Mr. Squeers took a large bite out of the cold beef, and recognised Nicholas.

"Sit down, Mr. Nickleby," said Squeers. "Here we are, a breakfasting, you see."

Nicholas did *not* see that anybody was breakfasting, except Mr. Squeers; but he bowed with all becoming reverence, and looked as cheerful as he could.

"Oh, that 's the milk and water, is it, William?" said Mr. Squeers. "Very good; don't forget the bread and butter presently."

At this fresh mention of the bread and butter, the five little boys looked very eager, and followed the waiter out, with their eyes; meanwhile Mr. Squeers tasted the milk and water.

"Ah," said that gentleman, smacking his lips, "here's richness! Think of the many beggars and orphans in the streets that would be glad of this, little boys. A shocking thing hunger is, is n't it, Mr. Nickleby?"

"Very shocking, sir," said Nicholas.

"When I say number one," pursued Mr. Squeers, putting the mug before the children, "the boy on the left hand nearest the window may take a drink; and when I say number two, the boy next him will go in, and so till we come to number five, which is the last boy. Are you ready?"

"Yes, sir," cried all the little boys with great eagerness.

"That's right," said Squeers, calmly getting on with his breakfast; "keep ready till I tell you to begin. Subdue your appetites, my dears, and you've conquered human natur. This is the way we inculcate strength of mind, Mr. Nickleby," said the schoolmaster, turning to Nicholas.

Nicholas murmured something — he knew not what — in reply; and the little boys, dividing their gaze between the mug, the bread and butter (which by this time had arrived) and every morsel which Mr. Squeers took into his mouth, remained with strained eyes in torments of expectation.

"Thank God for a good breakfast," said Squeers when he had finished. "Number one may take a drink."

Number one seized the mug ravenously, and had just drunk enough to make him wish for more, when Mr. Squeers gave the signal for number two, who gave up at the same interesting moment to number three; and the process was repeated until the milk and water terminated with number five.

"And now," said the schoolmaster, dividing the bread and butter for three into as many portions as there were children, "you had better look sharp with your breakfast, for the horn will blow in a minute or two, and then every boy leaves off."

Permission being thus given to fall to, the boys began to eat voraciously, and in desperate haste; while the schoolmaster (who was in high good humour after his meal) looked smilingly on. In a very short time the horn was heard.

"I thought it would n't be long," said Squeers, jumping up and producing a little basket from under the seat; "put what you have n't had time to eat, in here, boys. You 'll want it on the road!"

Nicholas was considerably startled by these very economical arrangements; but he had no time to reflect upon them, for the little boys had to be got up to the top of the coach, and their boxes had to be brought out and put in, and Mr. Squeers's luggage was to be seen carefully deposited in the boot, and all these offices were in his department.

Presently, however, the coach was off, and they had started on their long trip, made doubly long by the severity of the weather, which caused them to be detained several times; so it was not until six o'clock the following night, that he and Mr. Squeers, and the little boys, were all put down together at the George and New Inn, Greta Bridge.

"Is it much farther to Dotheboys Hall, sir?" asked Nicholas, when they had started off, the little boys in one vehicle, he and Mr. Squeers in another.

"About three mile from here," replied Squeers. "But you need n't call it a Hall down here. The fact is, it ain't a Hall," observed Squeers, drily.

"Oh, indeed!" said Nicholas, whom this piece of intelligence much astonished.

"No," replied Squeers. "We call it a Hall up in London, because it sounds better, but they don't know it by that name in these parts. A man may call his house an island if he likes; there 's no act of Parliament against that, I believe?"

"I believe not, sir," rejoined Nicholas.

Squeers eyed his companion slily at the conclusion of this little dialogue, and finding that he had grown thoughtful and appeared in nowise disposed to volunteer any observations, contented himself with lashing the pony until they reached their journey's end.

"Jump out," said Squeers. "Hallo there! Come and put this horse up. Be quick, will you!"

While the schoolmaster was uttering these and other impatient cries, Nicholas had time to observe that the school was a long, cold-looking house, one story high, with a few straggling outbuildings behind, and a barn and stable adjoining. Mr. Squeers had dismounted, and after ordering the boy, whom he called Smike, to see to the pony, and to take care that he had n't any more corn that night, he told Nicholas to wait at the front door a minute, while he went round and let him in.

A host of unpleasant misgivings, which had been crowding upon Nicholas during the whole journey, thronged into his mind. His great distance from home, and the impossibility of reaching it, except on foot, should he feel ever so anxious, presented itself to him in most alarming colours; and as he looked up at the dreary house and dark windows, and upon the wild country round, covered with snow, he felt a depression of heart and spirit which he never had experienced before.

"Now, then!" cried Squeers, poking his head out at the front door, "Where are you, Nickleby?"

"Here, sir," replied Nicholas.

"Come in, then," said Squeers, "the wind blows in, at this door, fit to knock a man off his legs."

Nicholas sighed, and hurried in. Mr. Squeers ushered him into a small parlour scantily furnished with a few chairs, a yellow map hung against the wall, and a couple of tables; one of which

bore some preparations for supper. Mrs. Squeers then came in, and was duly made acquainted with Nicholas, and after some conversation between Mr. and Mrs. Squeers, a young servant girl brought in a Yorkshire pie, which being set upon the table, the boy Smike appeared with a jug of ale.

Mr. Squeers meanwhile was emptying his great-coat pockets of letters to different boys, which he had brought down. Smike glanced, with an anxious and timid expression, at the papers, as if with a sickly hope that one among them might relate to him. The look was a very painful one, and went to Nicholas's heart at once; for it told a sad history. He considered the boy more attentively, and was surprised to observe the extraordinary mixture of garments which formed his dress. Although he could not have been less than eighteen or nineteen years old, and was tall for that age, he wore a skeleton suit, which, though most absurdly short in the arms and legs, was quite wide enough for his attenuated frame. In order that the lower part of his legs might be in keeping with this singular dress, he had a very large pair of boots, originally made for tops, but now too patched and tattered for a beggar. He was lame, and as he feigned to be busy arranging the table, glanced at the letters with a look so keen, and yet so dispirited and hopeless that Nicholas could hardly bear to watch him.

"What are you bothering about there, Smike?" cried Mrs. Squeers; "let the things alone, can't you?"

"Eh," said Squeers, looking up. "Oh, it's you, is it?"

"Yes, sir," replied the youth, pressing his hands together, as though to control, by force, the nervous wandering of his fingers. "Is there —"

"Well!" said Squeers.

"Have you — did anybody — has nothing been heard — about me?"

"Not a word," resumed Squeers, "and never will be.

Now, this is a pretty sort of thing, is n't it, that you should have been left here, all these years, and no money paid after the first six — nor no notice taken, nor no clue to be got who you belong to? It 's a pretty sort of thing that I should have to feed a great fellow like you, and never hope to get one penny for it, is n't it?"

The boy put his hand to his head as if he were making an effort to recollect something, and then, looking vacantly at his questioner, gradually broke into a smile, and limped away.

The following morning, when Nicholas appeared downstairs, Mrs. Squeers was in a state of great excitement.

"I can't find the school spoon anywhere," she said anxiously.

"Never mind it, my dear," observed Squeers in a soothing manner; "it 's of no consequence."

"No consequence? Why, how you talk!" retorted Mrs. Squeers sharply, "is n't it brimstone morning?"

"I forgot, my dear," rejoined Squeers; "yes, it certainly is. We purify the boys' bloods now and then, Nickleby."

"Oh! nonsense," rejoined Mrs. Squeers. "If the young man comes to be a teacher here, let him understand, at once, that we don't want any foolery about the boys. They have the brimstone and treacle, partly because if they had n't something or other in the way of medicine they 'd be always ailing and giving a world of trouble, and partly because it spoils their appetites and comes cheaper than breakfast and dinner. So, it does them good and us good at the same time, and that 's fair enough, I'm sure!"

"But come," said Squeers, "let 's go to the schoolroom; and lend me a hand with my school-coat, will you?"

Nicholas assisted his master to put on an old fustian shooting jacket, and Squeers, arming himself with his cane, led the way across a yard, to a door in the rear of the house.

"There," said the schoolmaster, as they stepped in together; "this is our shop, Nickleby!"

The "shop" was a bare and dirty room, with a couple of windows, whereof a tenth part might be of glass, the remainder being stopped up with old copybooks and paper. There were a couple of long, old rickety desks, cut and notched, and inked, and damaged, in every possible way; two or three forms; a detached desk for Squeers; and another for his assistant. The ceiling was supported, like that of a barn, by cross beams and rafters; and the walls were so stained and discoloured, that it was impossible to tell whether they had ever been touched with paint or whitewash.

But the pupils! How the last faint traces of hope faded from the mind of Nicholas as he looked in dismay around! There were pale and haggard faces, lank and bony figures, boys of stunted growth; little faces which should have been handsome, darkened with the scowl of sullen, dogged suffering; vicious-faced boys, brooding with leaden eyes, with every kindly sympathy and affection blasted in its birth, with every young and healthy feeling flogged and starved down.

And yet this scene, painful as it was, had its grotesque features. Mrs. Squeers stood at one of the desks, presiding over an immense basin of brimstone and treacle, of which delicious compound she administered a large instalment to each boy in succession: using for the purpose a common wooden spoon, which widened every young gentleman's mouth considerably: they being all obliged, under heavy corporal penalties, to take in the whole of the bowl at a gasp.

In another corner, huddled together for companionship, were the little boys who had arrived on the preceding night: at no great distance from these was seated the juvenile son and heir of Mr. Squeers, Wackford by name — a striking likeness of his father — kicking, with great vigour, under the

hands of Smike, who was fitting upon him a pair of new boots that bore a most suspicious resemblance to those which the least of the little boys had worn on the journey down — as the little boy himself seemed to think, for he was regarding the appropriation with a look of rueful amazement.

"Now," said Squeers, giving the desk a great rap with his cane, which made half the little boys nearly jump out of their boots, "is that physicking over?"

"Just over," said Mrs. Squeers, choking the last boy in her hurry, and tapping the crown of his head with the spoon to restore him. "Here, you Smike; take away now. Look sharp!"

Smike shuffled out with the basin, and Mrs. Squeers, hurried out after him into a wash-house where there were a number of little wooden bowls which were arranged upon a board. Into these bowls, Mrs. Squeers poured a brown composition, which was called porridge. A minute wedge of brown bread was inserted in each bowl, and when they had eaten their porridge by means of it, the boys ate the bread itself, and had finished their breakfast; whereupon Mr. Squeers said in a solemn voice, "For what we have received, may the Lord make us truly thankful!" — and went away to his own.

After eating his share of porridge, and having further disposed of a slice of bread and butter, allotted to him in virtue of his office, Nicholas sat himself down, to wait for school-time. He could not but observe how silent and sad the boys seemed to be. There was none of the noise and clamour of a school-room; none of its boisterous play, or hearty mirth. The only pupil who evinced the slightest tendency towards locomotion or playfulness was Master Squeers, and as his chief amusement was to tread upon the other boys' toes in his new boots, his flow of spirits was rather disagreeable than otherwise.

After some half-hour's delay, Mr. Squeers reappeared, and the boys took their places and their books, and ranged themselves in front of the schoolmaster's desk.

"This is the class in English spelling, and philosophy, Nickleby," said Squeers, beckoning Nicholas to stand beside him. "We'll get up a Latin one, and hand that over to you. Now, then, where's the first boy?"

"Please, sir, he's cleaning the back parlour window," answered one of the class.

"So he is, to be sure," rejoined Squeers. "We go upon the practical mode of teaching, Nickleby; the regular education system. C-l-e-a-n, clean, verb active, to make bright, to scour. When the boy knows this out of book, he goes and does it. Where's the second boy?"

"Please, sir, he's weeding the garden," replied a small voice.

"To be sure," said Squeers. "So he is. B-o-t, bot, t-i-n, tin, n-e-y, ney, bottinney, noun substantive, a knowledge of plants. Third boy, what's a horse?"

"A beast, sir," replied the boy.

"So it is," said Squeers. "Ain't it, Nickleby?"

"I believe there is no doubt of that, sir," answered Nicholas.

"Of course there is n't," said Squeers. "A horse is a quadruped, and quadruped's Latin for beast, as every body that's gone through the grammar knows. As you're perfect in that," resumed Squeers, turning to the boy, "go and look after *my* horse, and rub him down well, or I'll rub you down. The rest of the class go and draw water up till somebody tells you to leave off, for it's washing day to-morrow."

So saying, he dismissed the class, and eyed Nicholas with a look, half cunning and half doubtful, as if he were not altogether certain what he might think of him by this time.

"That's the way we do it, Nickleby," he said, after a pause.

Nicholas shrugged his shoulders, and said he saw it was.

"And a very good way it is, too," said Squeers. "Now just take them fourteen little boys and hear them some reading, because, you know, you must begin to be useful."

Mr. Squeers said this as if it had suddenly occurred to him, either that he must not say too much to his assistant, or that his assistant did not say enough to him in praise of the establishment. The children were arranged in a semi-circle round the new master, and he was soon listening to their dull, drawling, hesitating recital of stories to be found in the old spelling books. In this exciting occupation the morning lagged heavily on. At one o'clock, the boys sat down in the kitchen to some hard salt beef. After this, there was another hour of crouching in the schoolroom and shivering with cold, and then school began again.

It was Mr. Squeers's custom to call the boys together, and make a sort of report, after every half-yearly visit to the metropolis, regarding the relations and friends he had seen, the news he had heard, the letters he had brought down, and so forth. This solemn proceeding took place on the afternoon of the day succeeding his return. The boys were recalled from house-window, garden and stable, and cow-yard, when Mr. Squeers with a small bundle of papers in his hand, and Mrs. Squeers following with a pair of canes, entered the room, and proclaimed silence.

"Let any boy speak without leave," said Mr. Squeers mildly, "and I'll take the skin off his back."

This special proclamation had the desired effect, and a death-like silence immediately prevailed, in the midst of which Mr. Squeers went on to say:

"Boys, I've been to London, and have returned as strong and well as ever."

According to half-yearly custom, the boys gave three feeble cheers at this refreshing intelligence. Such cheers! Sighs of extra strength with the chill on.

Squeers then proceeded to give several messages of various degrees of unpleasantness to sundry of the boys, followed up by vigorous canings where he had any grudge to pay off. One by one the boys answered to their names.

"Now let us see," said Squeers. "A letter for Cobbey. Stand up, Cobbey."

Another boy stood up and eyed the letter very hard, while Squeers made a mental abstract of the same.

"Oh," said Squeers; "Cobbey's grandmother is dead, which is all the news his sister sends, except eighteenpence, which will just pay for that broken square of glass. Mrs. Squeers, my dear, will you take the money?"

The worthy lady pocketed the eighteenpence with a most business-like air, and Squeers passed on to the next boy, as coolly as possible.

"Mobbs's step-mother," said Squeers, "took to her bed on hearing that he would n't eat fat, and has been very ill ever since. She wishes to know, by an early post, where he expects to go to if he quarrels with his vittles; and with what feelings he could turn up his nose at the cow's liver broth, after his good master had asked a blessing on it. This was told her in the London newspapers — not by Mr. Squeers, for he is too kind and good to set anybody against anybody — and it has vexed her so much, Mobbs can't think. She is sorry to find he is discontented, which is sinful and horrid, and hopes Mr. Squeers will flog him into a happier state of mind; and with this view, she has also stopped his halfpenny a week pocket-money, and given a double-bladed knife with a corkscrew in it to the Missionaries, which she had bought on purpose for him."

"A sulky state of feeling," said Squeers, after a terrible pause. "Cheerfulness and contentment must be kept up. Mobbs, come to me."

Mobbs moved slowly towards the desk, rubbing his eyes in anticipation of good cause for doing so; and he soon afterwards retired by the side door, with as good a cause as a boy need have.

Mr. Squeers then proceeded to open a miscellaneous collection of letters; some enclosing money, which Mrs. Squeers "took care of;" and others referring to small articles of apparel, all of which the same lady stated to be too large, or too small, and calculated for nobody but young Squeers, who would appear indeed to have had most accommodating limbs, since everything that came into the school fitted him to a nicety. His head, in particular, must have been singularly elastic, for hats and caps of all dimensions were alike to him.

This business despatched, a few slovenly lessons were performed, and Squeers retired to his fireside, leaving Nicholas to take care of the boys in the schoolroom. There was a small stove at that corner of the room which was nearest to the master's desk, and by it Nicholas sat down, depressed and degraded by the consciousness of his position. But for the present his resolve was taken. He had written to his mother and sister, announcing the safe conclusion of his journey, and saying as little about Dotheboys Hall, and saying that little as cheerfully, as he could. He hoped that by remaining where he was, he might do some good, even there; at all events, others depended too much on him to admit of his complaining just then.

From the moment of making that resolve, Nicholas got on in his place as well as he could, doing his best to improve matters. He arranged a few regular lessons for the boys, and saw that they were well attended; but his heart sank more and

more, for besides the dull, unvarying round of misery there was another system of annoyance which nearly drove him wild by its injustice and cruelty. Upon the wretched creature Smike, all the spleen and ill-humour that could not be vented on Nicholas, were unceasingly bestowed. Drudgery would have been nothing — Smike was well used to that. Buffetings inflicted without cause would have been equally a matter of course, for to them also he had served a long and weary apprenticeship; but it was no sooner observed that he had become attached to Nicholas, than stripes and blows, morning, noon, and night, were his only portion. Squeers was jealous of the influence which his new teacher had so soon acquired; and his family hated him, and Smike paid for both. Nicholas saw this, and ground his teeth at every repetition of the savage and cowardly attack.

Not many weeks later, on a cold January morning, when Nicholas awoke he found the entire school agog with quivering excitement. Smike had run away, and Squeers's anger was at white heat against him and every one else.

"He is off," said Mrs. Squeers, angrily. "The cow-house and stable are locked up, so he can't be there; and he's not down stairs anywhere. He must have gone York way, and by a public road too. Then of course," continued Mrs. Squeers, "as he had no money he must beg his way, and he could do that nowhere, but on the public road."

"That's true," exclaimed Squeers, clapping his hands.

"True! Yes; but you would never have thought of it, if I hadn't said so," replied his wife. "Now, if you take the chaise and go one road, and I borrow Swallow's chaise and go the other, one or other of us is pretty certain to lay hold of him!"

This plan was adopted and put in execution without a moment's delay.

After a very hasty breakfast, Squeers started forth in the pony-chaise, intent upon discovery and vengeance. Shortly afterwards, Mrs. Squeers issued forth in another chaise and another direction, taking with her a good-sized bludgeon, several odd pieces of strong cord, and a stout labouring man.

Nicholas remained behind, in a tumult of feeling, sensible that whatever might be the upshot of the boy's flight, nothing but painful and deplorable consequences were likely to ensue from it. The unhappy being had established a hold upon his sympathy and compassion, which made his heart ache at the prospect of the suffering he was destined to undergo.

The next evening Squeers returned alone and unsuccessful. Another day came, and Nicholas was scarcely awake when he heard the wheels of a chaise approaching the house. It stopped. The voice of Mrs. Squeers was heard in exultation. Nicholas hardly dared to look out of the window; but he did so, and the very first object that met his eyes was the wretched Smike: so bedabbled with mud and rain, so haggard, and worn, and wild, that, but for his garments being such as no scarecrow was ever seen to wear, he might have been doubtful, even then, of his identity.

"Lift him out," said Squeers, after he had literally feasted his eyes upon the culprit. "Bring him in; bring him in!"

"Take care!" cried Mrs. Squeers. "We tied his legs under the apron and made 'em fast to the chaise, to prevent his giving us the slip again."

With hands trembling with delight, Squeers unloosened the cord; and Smike, more dead than alive, was brought into the house and securely locked up in a cellar.

It may be a matter of surprise to some persons that Mr. and Mrs. Squeers should have taken so much trouble to

repossess themselves of an incumbrance of which it was their wont to complain so loudly; but the services of the drudge, if performed by any one else, would have cost some ten or twelve shillings per week in the shape of wages; and furthermore, all runaways were, as a matter of policy, made severe examples of, at Dotheboys Hall, as in consequence of the limited extent of its attractions, there was but little inducement, beyond the powerful impulse of fear, for any pupil, provided with the usual number of legs and the power of using them, to remain.

The news that Smike had been caught and brought back in triumph, ran like wild-fire through the hungry community, and expectation was on tiptoe all the morning. On tiptoe it was destined to remain, however, until afternoon; when Squeers called the school together, and dragged Smike by the collar to the front of the room before them all.

"Have you anything to say?" demanded Squeers, giving his right arm two or three flourishes to try its power and suppleness. "Stand a little out of the way, Mrs. Squeers, my dear; I've hardly got room enough."

"Spare me, sir!" cried Smike.

"Oh! that's all, is it?" said Squeers. "Yes, I'll flog you within an inch of your life, and spare you that."

"I was driven to do it," said Smike faintly; and casting an imploring look about him.

"Driven to do it, were you?" said Squeers. "Oh! It was n't your fault; it was mine, I suppose — eh?"

Squeers caught the boy firmly in his grip; one desperate cut had fallen on his body — he was wincing from the lash and uttering a scream of pain — it was raised again, and again about to fall — when Nicholas Nickleby, suddenly starting up, cried "Stop!" in a voice that made the rafters ring.

"Who cried stop?" said Squeers, turning savagely round.

"I," said Nicholas, stepping forward. "This must not go on!"

"Must not go on!" cried Squeers, almost in a shriek.

"No!" thundered Nicholas.

Aghast and stupified by the boldness of the interference, Squeers released his hold of Smike, and, falling back a pace or two, gazed upon Nicholas with looks that were positively frightful.

"I say must not," repeated Nicholas, nothing daunted; "shall not. I will prevent it."

Squeers continued to gaze upon him, with his eyes starting out of his head; but astonishment had actually, for the moment, bereft him of speech.

"You have disregarded all my quiet interference in the miserable lad's behalf," said Nicholas; "you have returned no answer to the letter in which I begged forgiveness for him, and offered to be responsible that he would remain quietly here. Don't blame me for this public interference. You have brought it upon yourself; not I."

"Sit down, beggar!" screamed Squeers, almost beside himself with rage, and seizing Smike as he spoke.

"Wretch," rejoined Nicholas, fiercely, "touch him at your peril! I will not stand by and see it done. My blood is up, and I have the strength of ten such men as you. Look to yourself, for by Heaven I will not spare you, if you drive me on!"

"Stand back," cried Squeers, brandishing his weapon.

"I have a long series of insults to avenge," said Nicholas, flushed with passion; "and my indignation is aggravated by the dastardly cruelties practised on helpless infancy in this foul den. Have a care; for if you do rouse the devil within me, the consequences shall fall heavily upon your own head!"

He had scarcely spoken, when Squeers, in a violent outbreak of wrath, and with a cry like the howl of a wild beast, struck him a blow across the face with his instrument of torture, which raised up a bar of livid flesh as it was inflicted. Smarting with the agony of the blow, and concentrating into that one moment all his feelings of rage, scorn, and indignation, Nicholas sprang upon him, wrested the weapon from his hand, and pinning him by the throat, beat the ruffian till he roared for mercy.

Then he hastily retired from the fray, leaving Squeers's family to restore him as best they might. Seeking his room with all possible haste, Nicholas considered seriously what course of action was best for him to adopt.

After a brief consideration, he packed up a few clothes in a small leathern valise, and, finding that nobody offered to oppose his progress, marched boldly out by the front door, and struck into the road which led to Greta Bridge.

When he had cooled, sufficiently to be enabled to give his present circumstances some little reflection, they did not appear in a very encouraging light; he had only four shillings and a few pence in his pocket, and was something more than two hundred and fifty miles from London, whither he resolved to direct his steps.

He lay, that night, at a cottage where beds were let at a cheap rate to the more humble class of travellers; and, rising betimes next morning, made his way before night to Boroughbridge. Passing through that town in search of some cheap resting-place, he stumbled upon an empty barn within a couple of hundred yards of the road side; in a warm corner of which he stretched his weary limbs, and soon fell asleep.

When he awoke next morning, and tried to recollect his dreams, which had been all connected with his recent sojourn at Dotheboys Hall, he sat up, rubbed his eyes, and stared —

not with the most composed countenance possible — at some motionless object which seemed to be stationed within a few yards in front of him.

"Strange!" cried Nicholas, "can this be some lingering creation of the visions that have scarcely left me? It cannot be real — and yet I — I am awake! Smike!"

The form moved, rose, advanced, and dropped upon its knees at his feet. It was Smike indeed.

"Why do you kneel to me?" said Nicholas, hastily raising him.

"To go with you — anywhere — everywhere — to the world's end — to the churchyard grave," replied Smike, clinging to his hand. "Let me, oh, do let me. You are my home — my kind friend — take me with you, pray."

I am a friend who can do "little for you," said Nicholas, kindly. "How came you here?"

He had followed him, it seemed; had never lost sight of him all the way; had watched while he slept, and when he halted for refreshment; and had feared to appear before, lest he should be sent back. He had not intended to appear now, but Nicholas had awakened more suddenly than he looked for, and he had had no time to conceal himself.

"Poor fellow!" said Nicholas, "your hard fate denies you any friend but one, and he is nearly as poor and helpless as yourself."

"May I — may I go with you?" asked Smike timidly. "I will be your faithful hard-working servant, I will, indeed. I want no clothes," added the poor creature, drawing his rags together; "these will do very well. I only want to be near you."

"And you shall!" cried Nicholas. "The world shall deal by you as it does by me, till one or both of us shall quit it for a better. Come!"

With these words, he strapped his burden on his shoulders, and, taking his stick in one hand, extended the other to his delighted charge; and so they passed out of the old barn together, out from the nightmare of life at Dotheboys Hall, into the busy world outside.

. . . . . .

Some years later, when Mr. Squeers was making one of his customary semi-annual visits to London, he was arrested and sent to jail by persons who had discovered his system of fraud and cruelty, as well as the fact that he had in his possession a stolen will. Upon John Browdie, a burly Scotchman, devolved the duty of carrying the painful news to Mrs. Squeers, and of dismissing the school.

So, arriving at Dotheboys Hall, he tied his horse to a gate, and made his way to the schoolroom door, which he found locked on the inside. A tremendous noise and riot arose from within, and, applying his eye to a convenient crevice in the wall, he did not remain long in ignorance of its meaning.

The news of Mr. Squeers's downfall had reached Dotheboys; that was quite clear. To all appearance, it had very recently become known to the young gentlemen; for rebellion had just broken out.

It was one of the brimstone-and-treacle mornings, and Mrs. Squeers had entered school according to custom with the large bowl and spoon, followed by Miss Squeers and the amiable Wackford: who, during his father's absence, had taken upon himself such minor branches of the executive as kicking the pupils with his nailed boots, pulling the hair of some of the smaller boys, pinching the others in aggravating places, and rendering himself in various similar ways a great comfort and happiness to his mother. Their entrance, whether by premeditation or a simultaneous impulse, was

the signal of revolt for the boys. While one detachment rushed to the door and locked it, and another mounted the desks and forms, the stoutest (and consequently the newest) boy seized the cane, and, confronting Mrs. Squeers with a stern countenance, snatched off her cap and beaver bonnet, put it on his own head, armed himself with the wooden spoon, and bade her, on pain of death, go down upon her knees and take a dose directly. Before that estimable lady could recover herself, or offer the slightest retaliation, she was forced into a kneeling posture by a crowd of shouting tormentors, and compelled to swallow a spoonful of the odious mixture, rendered more than usually savoury by the immersion in the bowl of Master Wackford's head, whose ducking was entrusted to another rebel. The success of this first achievement prompted the malicious crowd, whose faces were clustered together in every variety of lank and half-starved ugliness, to further acts of outrage. The leader was insisting upon Mrs. Squeers repeating her dose, Master Squeers was undergoing another dip in the treacle, when John Browdie, bursting open the door with a vigorous kick, rushed to the rescue. The shouts, screams, groans, hoots, and clapping of hands, suddenly ceased, and a dead silence ensued.

"Ye be noice chaps," said John, looking steadily round. "What's to do here, thou yoong dogs?"

"Squeers is in prison, and we are going to run away!" cried a score of shrill voices. "We won't stop, we won't stop!"

"Weel then, dinnot stop," replied John; "who waants thee to stop? Roon awa' loike men, but dinnot hurt the women.

"Hurrah!" cried the shrill voices, more shrilly still.

"Hurrah?" repeated John. "Weel, hurrah loike men too. Noo then, look out. Hip — hip — hip — hurrah!"

"Hurrah!" cried the voices.

"Hurrah! agean," said John. "Looder still."

The boys obeyed.

"Anoother!" said John. "Dinnot be afeared on it. Let's have a good un!"

"Hurrah!"

"Noo then," said John, "let's have yan more to end wi', and then coot off as quick as you loike. Tak' a good breath noo — Squeers be in jail — the school's brokken oop — it's all ower — past and gane — think o' thot, and let it be a hearty 'un! Hurrah!"

Such a cheer arose as the walls of Dotheboys Hall had never echoed before, and were destined never to respond to again. When the sound had died away, the school was empty; and of the busy noisy crowd which had peopled it but five minutes before, not one remained.

For some days afterwards, the neighbouring country was overrun with boys, who, the report went, had been secretly furnished by Mr. and Mrs. Browdie, not only with a hearty meal of bread and meat, but with sundry shillings and sixpences to help them on their way.

There were a few timid young children, who, miserable as they had been, and many as were the tears they had shed in the wretched school, still knew no other home, and had formed for it a sort of attachment which made them weep when the bolder spirits fled, and cling to it as a refuge. Of these, some were found crying under hedges and in such places, frightened at the solitude. One had a dead bird in a little cage; he had wandered nearly twenty miles, and when his poor favourite died, lost courage, and lay down beside him. Another was discovered in a yard hard by the school, sleeping with a dog, who bit at those who came to remove him, and licked the sleeping child's pale face.

They were taken back, and some other stragglers were recovered, but by degrees they were all claimed, and, in course of time, Dotheboys Hall and its last breaking up began to be forgotten by the neighbours, or to be only spoken of as among things that had been.

DAVID COPPERFIELD

Little Em'ly and David Copperfield.

DAVID COPPERFIELD

THE first things that assume shape and form in the recollections of my childhood are my mother, with her pretty hair and youthful shape, and Peggotty, our faithful serving maid, with no shape at all, and eyes so dark that they seemed to darken their whole neighbourhood in her face, and cheeks and arms so hard and red that I wonder the birds did n't peck her in preference to apples.

What else do I remember? — let me see. There comes to me a vision of our home, Blunderstone Rookery, with its ground-floor kitchen, and long passage leading from it to the front door. A dark store-room opens out of the kitchen, and in it there is the smell of soap, pickles, pepper, candles, and coffee, all at one whiff. Then there are the two parlours; — the one in which we sit of an evening, my mother and I and Peggotty, — for Peggotty is quite our companion, — and the best parlour where we sit on a Sunday; grandly, but not so comfortably, while my mother reads the old familiar Bible stories to us.

And now I see the outside of our house, with the latticed bedroom windows, and the ragged old rooks' nests dangling in the elm-trees. I see the garden — a very preserve of butterflies, where the pigeon house and dog-kennel are, and the fruit trees. And I see again my mother winding her bright curls around her fingers, and nobody is as proud of her beauty as I am.

One night when Peggotty and I had been sitting cosily by the parlour fire, my mother came home from spending the evening at a neighbour's, and with her was a gentleman with beautiful black hair and whiskers. As my mother stooped to

kiss me, the gentleman said I was a more highly privileged little fellow than a monarch.

"What does that mean?" I asked him. He smiled and patted me on the head in reply, but somehow I did n't like him, and I shrank away, jealous that his hand should touch my mother's in touching me — although my mother's gentle chiding made me ashamed of the involuntary motion, and of my dislike for this new friend of hers, but from chance words which I heard Peggotty utter, I knew that she too felt as I did.

From that time the gentleman with black whiskers, Mr. Murdstone by name, was at our house constantly, and gradually I became used to seeing him, but I liked him no better than at first. The sight of him filled me with a fear that something was going to happen, and time proved that I was right in my apprehension. One night when my mother, as usual, was out, Peggotty asked me,

"Master Davy, how should you like to go along with me and spend a fortnight at my brother's at Yarmouth? Would n't *that* be a treat?"

"Is your brother an agreeable man, Peggotty?" I inquired, provisionally.

"Oh what an agreeable man he is!" cried Peggotty, holding up her hands. "Then there 's the sea; and the boats; and the fishermen; and the beach; and 'Am to play with —"

Peggotty meant her nephew Ham, but she spoke of him as a morsel of English Grammar.

I was flushed with her summary of delights, and replied that it would indeed be a treat, but what would my mother say?

But Peggotty was sure that I would be allowed to go, and so it proved. My mother did not seem nearly so much surprised as I expected, and arranged at once for my visit.

The day soon came for our going. I was in a fever of expectation, and half afraid that an earthquake might stop the

expedition, but soon after breakfast we set off, in a carrier's cart, and the carrier's lazy horse shuffled along, carrying us towards Yarmouth. We had a fine basket of refreshments, and we ate a good deal, and slept a good deal, and finally arrived in Yarmouth, where at the public-house we found Ham waiting for us. He was a huge, strong fellow of six feet, with a simpering boy's face and curly light hair, and he insisted on carrying me on his back, as well as a small box of ours under his arm. We turned down lanes, and went past gas-works, boat-builders' yards, and riggers' lofts, and presently Ham said,

"Yon 's our house, Mas'r Davy!"

I looked over the wilderness, and away at the sea, and away at the river, but no house could *I* make out. There was a black barge not far off, high and dry on the ground, with an iron funnel for a chimney, and smoking very cosily.

"That 's not it?" said I. "That ship-looking thing?"

"That 's it, Mas'r Davy," returned Ham.

If it had been Aladdin's palace, I could not have been more charmed with the romantic idea of living in it. There was a delightful door cut in the side, and it was roofed in, and there were little windows in it. It was beautifully clean inside and as tidy as possible. There was a table, and a Dutch clock, and a chest of drawers. On the walls were some coloured pictures of Biblical subjects. Abraham in red, going to sacrifice Isaac in blue, and Daniel in yellow, cast into a den of green lions, were most prominent. Also, there was a mantel-shelf, and some lockers and boxes which served for seats. Then Peggotty showed me the completest little bedroom ever seen, in the stern of the vessel, with a tiny bed, a little looking-glass framed in oyster-shells, and a nosegay of seaweed in a blue mug on the table. The walls were white-washed, and the patchwork counterpane made my eyes quite ache with its brightness.

When I took out my pocket-handkerchief, it smelt as if it had wrapped up a lobster. When I confided this to Peggotty, she told me that her brother dealt in lobsters, crabs, and crawfish, which accounted for the sea smells in the delightful house.

The inmates of the boat were its master, Mr. Peggotty and his orphan nephew and niece, Ham and little Em'ly, which latter was a beautiful little girl, who wore a necklace of blue beads. There was also Mrs. Gummidge, an old lady who sat continually by the fire and knitted, and who was the widow of a former partner of Mr. Peggotty's.

With little Em'ly I at once fell violently in love, and we used to walk upon the beach in a loving manner, hours and hours. I am sure I loved that baby quite as truly and with more purity than can enter into the best love of a later time of life; and when the time came for going home, our agony of mind at parting was intense.

During my visit I had been completely absorbed in my new companions, but no sooner were we turned homeward than my heart began to throb at thought of again seeing my mother, — my comforter and friend. To my surprise, when we reached the dear old Rookery, not my mother, but a strange servant opened the door.

"Why, Peggotty," I said, ruefully, "is n't she come home?"

"Yes, yes, Master Davy," said Peggotty, "She 's come home. Wait a bit, Master Davy, and I 'll — I 'll tell you something."

Intensely agitated, Peggotty led me into the kitchen and closed the door, then, as she untied her bonnet with a shaking hand, she said breathlessly; "Master Davy, what do you think? You have got a Pa!"

I trembled and turned white, and thought of my father's grave in the churchyard, which I knew so well.

"A new one," said Peggotty.

"A new one?" I repeated.

Peggotty gasped, as if she were swallowing something very hard, and, putting out her hand, said,

"Come and see him."

"I don't want to see him."

"And your mama," said Peggotty.

I ceased to draw back, and we went straight to the best parlour. On one side of the fire, sat my mother; on the other, Mr. Murdstone. My mother dropped her work, and arose hurriedly, but timidly, I thought.

"Now, Clara, my dear," said Mr. Murdstone. "Recollect! control yourself! Davy boy, how do you do?"

I gave him my hand. Then I went over to my mother. She kissed me, patted me gently on the shoulder, and sat down again to her work, while Mr. Murdstone watched us both. I turned to look out of the window, and as soon as I could, I crept up-stairs. My old dear bedroom was changed, and I was to sleep a long way off, and there on my bed, thinking miserable thoughts, I cried myself to sleep. I was awakened by somebody saying, "Here he is!" and there beside me were my mother and Peggotty, asking what was the matter.

I answered, "Nothing," and turned over, to hide my trembling lip.

"Davy," said my mother. "Davy, my child!"

Then when she would have caressed me in the old fashion, Mr. Murdstone came up and sent the others away.

"David," he said, making his lips thin, by pressing them together, "if I have an obstinate horse or dog to deal with, what do you think I do?"

"I don't know."

"I beat him. I make him wince and smart. I say to

myself, 'I'll conquer that fellow;' and if it were to cost him all the blood he had, I should do it. What is that upon your face?"

"Dirt," I said.

He knew it was the mark of tears as well as I. But if he had asked the question twenty times, with twenty blows, I believe my baby heart would have burst before I would have told him so.

"You have a good deal of intelligence for a little fellow," he said, "and you understood me very well, I see. Wash that face, sir, and come down with me."

He pointed to the washstand, and motioned me to obey him directly, and I have little doubt that he would have knocked me down, had I hesitated.

As he walked me into the parlour, he said to my mother, "Clara, my dear, you will not be made uncomfortable any more, I hope. We shall soon improve our youthful humours."

I might have been made another creature for life, by a kind word just then. A word of welcome home, of reassurance that it *was* home, might have made me dutiful to my new father, and made me respect instead of hate him; but the word was not spoken, and the time for it was gone.

After that my life was a lonely one. Mr. Murdstone seemed to be very fond of my mother, and she of him, but also she seemed to stand in great awe of him, and dared not do what he might not approve. Soon Miss Murdstone came to live with us. She was a gloomy-looking lady, dark like her brother, and much like him in character. She assumed the care of the house, and mother had nothing more to do with it. Meanwhile, I learnt lessons at home.

Shall I ever forget those lessons! They were presided over nominally by my mother, but really by Mr. Murdstone and his sister, who were always present, and the very sight of

the Murdstones had such an effect upon me, that every word I had tried to learn would glide away, and go I know not where. I was treated to so much systematic cruelty that, after six months, I became sullen, dull, and dogged, and this feeling was not lessened by the fact that I was more and more shut out from my mother. I believe I should have been almost stupified but for the small collection of books which had belonged to my own father, and to which I had access. From that blessed little room, came forth "Roderick Random," "Peregrine Pickle," "Tom Jones," "The Vicar of Wakefield," "Robinson Crusoe," "Gil Blas," and "Don Quixote," — a glorious company to sustain me. They kept alive my fancy, and my hope of something beyond that place and time — they, and the "Arabian Nights" and "Tales of the Genii," — and were my only comfort.

One morning, when I went into the parlour with my books, I found Mr. Murdstone poising a cane in the air, which he had obtained, it seemed, for the purpose of flogging me for any mistake I might make. My apprehension was so great, that the words of my lessons slipped off by the entire page, — I made mistake after mistake, failure upon failure, — and presently Mr. Murdstone rose, taking up the cane, and telling me to follow him. As he took me out at the door, my mother ran towards us. Miss Murdstone said, "Clara! are you a perfect fool?" and interfered. I saw my mother stop her ears then, and I heard her crying.

Mr. Murdstone walked me up to my room, and when we got there suddenly twisted my head under his arm.

"Mr. Murdstone! Sir!" I cried, "Don't. Pray don't beat me! I have tried to learn, sir, but I can't learn while you and Miss Murdstone are by. I can't indeed!"

"Can't you, indeed, David?" he said. "We 'll try that." He had my head as in a vise, but I twined round him some-

how, and stopped him for a moment, entreating him again not to beat me. It was only for a moment though, for he cut me heavily an instant afterwards, and in the same instant I caught the hand with which he held me in my mouth and bit it through. It sets my teeth on edge to think of it.

He beat me then, as if he would have beaten me to death. Above all the noise we made, I heard them running up the stairs and crying out — my mother and Peggotty. Then he was gone; and the door was locked outside; and I was lying, fevered and hot, and torn, and sore, and raging in my puny way, upon the floor.

How well I recollect, when I became quiet, what an unnatural stillness seemed to reign through the house! When my passion began to cool, how wicked I began to feel! My stripes were sore and stiff, and made me cry afresh when I moved, but they were nothing to the guilt I felt. It lay like lead upon my breast. For five days I was imprisoned, and of the length of those days I can convey no idea to any one. They occupy the place of years in my remembrance. On the fifth night Peggotty came to my door and whispered my name through the keyhole.

"What is going to be done with me, Peggotty dear?" I asked.

"School. Near London," was Peggotty's answer.

"When, Peggotty?"

"To-morrow."

"Is that the reason why Miss Murdstone took the clothes out of my drawers?"

"Yes," said Peggotty. "Box."

"Sha n't I see mama?"

"Yes," said Peggotty. "Morning."

Then followed some assurances of affection, which Peggotty sobbed through the keyhole, and from that night I

had an affection for her greater than for any one, except my mother.

In the morning Miss Murdstone appeared and told me what I already knew, and said that I was to come down into the parlour, and have my breakfast. My mother was there, very pale, and with red eyes, into whose arms I ran, and begged her pardon from my suffering soul.

"Oh, Davy," she said. "That you could hurt any one I love! Try to be better, pray to be better! I forgive you, but I am so grieved, Davy, that you should have such bad passions in your heart!"

They had persuaded her that I was a wicked fellow, and she was more sorry for that, than for my going away. I felt it sorely. I tried to eat, but tears dropped upon my bread-and-butter, and trickled into my tea, and I could not swallow.

Presently the carrier was at the door, my box was in the cart, and before I could realise it, my mother was holding me in a farewell embrace, and then I got into the cart, and the lazy horse started off.

About half a mile away from home the carrier stopped, and Peggotty burst from a hedge and climbed into the cart. She squeezed me until I could scarcely speak, and crammed some bags of cakes into my pockets, and a purse into my hand, but not a word did she speak. Then with a final hug, she climbed down and ran away again, and we started on once more.

Having by this time cried as much as I possibly could, I began to think it was of no use crying any more. The carrier agreed with me, and proposed that my pocket handkerchief should be spread upon the horse's back to dry, to which I assented, and then turned my attention to the purse. It had three bright shillings in it, which Peggotty had evidently polished up with whitening, — but more precious yet, — were

two half-crowns in a bit of paper on which my mother had written, "For Davy. With my love."

I was so overcome by this that I asked the carrier to reach me my pocket handkerchief again, but he thought I had better do without it, so I wiped my eyes on my sleeve and stopped myself — and on we jogged.

At Yarmouth we drove to the inn-yard, where I dismounted, and was given dinner, after which I mounted the coach for London, and at three o'clock we started off on a trip which was not unpleasant to me, with its many novel sights and experiences. In London, at an inn in Whitechapel, I was met by a Mr. Mell, one of the teachers at Salem House, the school to which I was going. We journeyed on together, and by the next day were at Salem House, which was a square brick building with wings, enclosed with a high brick wall. I was astonished at the perfect quiet there, until Mr. Mell told me that the boys were at their homes on account of it being holiday-time, and that even the proprietor was away. And he added that I was sent in vacation as a punishment for my misdoing.

I can see the schoolroom now, into which he took me, with its long rows of desks and forms, and bristling all round with pegs for hats and slates. Scraps of old copy-books and exercises littered the dirty floor, ink had been splashed everywhere, and the air of the place was indescribably dreary. My companion left me there alone for a while, and as I roamed round, I came upon a pasteboard placard, beautifully written, lying on a desk, bearing these words, "*Take care of him. He bites.*"

I got upon the desk immediately, apprehensive of at least a great dog underneath, but I could see nothing of him. I was still peering about, when Mr. Mell came back, and asked what I did up there.

"I beg your pardon, sir," said I, "I'm looking for the dog."

"Dog," said he, "What dog?"

"The one that's to be taken care of, sir; that bites."

"Copperfield," said he, gravely, "that's not a dog. That's a boy. My instructions are, Copperfield, to put this placard on your back. I am sorry to make such a beginning with you, but I must do it."

With that he took me down, and tied the placard on my shoulders, and wherever I went afterwards I carried it. What I suffered from that placard, nobody can imagine. I always fancied that somebody was reading it, and I began to have a dread of myself, as a kind of wild boy who *did* bite. Above and beyond all, I dreaded the coming back of the boys and what they might think of me, and my days and nights were filled with gloomy forebodings. In a month Mr. Creakle, the proprietor of Salem House arrived. He was stout, with a bald head, a fiery face, small, deep-set eyes, thick veins in his forehead, a little nose, and a large chin. His face always looked angry, but what impressed me most about him was that he spoke always in a whisper. He inquired at once about my behaviour, and seemed disappointed to find that there was nothing against me so far. He then told me that he knew my stepfather as a man of strong character, and that he should carry out his wishes concerning me. He pinched my ear with ferocious playfulness, and I was very much frightened by his manner and words; but before I was ordered away, I ventured to ask if the placard might not be removed. Whether Mr. Creakle was in earnest, or only meant to frighten me, I don't know, but he made a burst out of his chair, before which I precipitately retreated, and never once stopped until I reached my own bedroom, where, finding I was not pursued, I went to bed, and lay quaking for a couple of hours.

The next day the other masters and the scholars began to arrive. Jolly Tommy Traddles was the first boy back, and it was a happy circumstance for me. He enjoyed my placard so much that he saved me from the embarrassment of either disclosure or concealment, by presenting me to the other boys in this way; "Look here! Here's a game!" Happily, too, most of the boys came back low-spirited, and were not as boisterous at my expense as I expected. Some of them did dance about me like wild Indians and pretended I was a dog, patting me and saying, "Lie down, sir!" and calling me Towzer, which of course was trying, but, on the whole, much better than I had anticipated.

I was not considered as formally received into the school until I had met J. Steerforth. He was one of the older scholars, reputed to be brilliant and clever, and quite the lion of the school. He inquired, under a shed in the playground, into the particulars of my punishment, and said it was "a jolly shame," which opinion bound me to him ever afterwards. Then he asked me what money I had, and when I answered seven shillings, he suggested that I spend a couple of shillings or so in a bottle of currant wine, and a couple or so in almond cakes, and another in fruit, and another in biscuit, for a little celebration that night in our bedroom, in honour of my arrival, and of course I said I should be glad to do so. I was a little uneasy about wasting my mother's half-crowns, but I did not dare to say so, and Steerforth procured the feast and laid it out on my bed, saying, "There you are, young Copperfield, and a royal spread you've got."

I could n't think of doing the honours of the feast, and begged him to preside. So he sat upon my pillow, handing round the viands, and dispensing the wine. As to me, I sat next to him, and the rest grouped about us on the nearest beds and on the floor; and there we sat in the dim moonlight,

talking in whispers, while I heard all the school gossip, about Mr. Creakle and his cruelty, and about the other masters, and that the only boy on whom Mr. Creakle never dared to lay a hand was Steerforth. All this and much more I heard before we at last betook ourselves to bed.

The next day school began in earnest, and so far as the boys were concerned, Steerforth continued his protection of me, and was always a very firm and useful friend, as no one dared annoy any one whom he liked.

One night he discovered that my head was filled with stories of my favourite heroes, which I could relate with some measure of graphic talent, and after that I was obliged to reel off stories by the yard, making myself into a regular Sultana Scheherezade for his benefit. I was much flattered by his interest in my tales, and the only drawback to telling them was that I was often very sleepy at night, and it was sometimes very hard work to be roused and forced into a long recital before the rising bell rang, but Steerforth was resolute, and as in return he explained sums and exercises to me, I was no loser by the transaction. Also, I honestly admired and loved the handsome fellow, and desired to please him.

And so from week to week the story-telling in the dark went on, and whatever I had within me that was romantic or dreamy was encouraged by it. By degrees the other boys joined the circle of listeners. Traddles was always overcome with mirth at the comic parts of the stories. He used to pretend that he could n't keep his teeth from chattering when an Alguazil was mentioned in connection with the adventures of Gil Blas, and I remember when Gil Blas met the captain of the robbers in Madrid, Traddles counterfeited such an ague of terror, that Mr. Creakle who was prowling about the passage, overheard him, and flogged him for disorderly conduct.

There was little of especial moment in my first half-term at Salem House, except the quarrel which took place between Steerforth and Mr. Mell; and an unexpected visit from Ham and Mr. Peggotty when I had the delight of introducing those rollicking fellows to Steerforth, whose bright, easy manner charmed them, as it did most persons.

The rest of the half-year is a jumble in my recollection; and then came the holidays, which were spent at home. I found my mother as tender as of old. She hugged me and kissed me, and on that first blessed night, as Mr. and Miss Murdstone were away on a visit, mother and Peggotty and I dined together by the fireside in the old fashion. My mother spoke of herself as a weak, ignorant young thing whom the Murdstones were endeavouring to make as strong in character as themselves. Then we talked about Salem House and my experiences and friends there, and were very happy. That evening as the last of its race will never pass out of my memory. I was at home for a month, but after that first night I felt in the way, for the Murdstones were always with my mother. On the evening after my return I made a very humble apology to Mr. Murdstone, which he received with cold dignity. I tried to spend my evenings in the kitchen with Peggotty, but of this Mr. Murdstone did not approve, so I sat wearily in the parlour, waiting for the hours to wear themselves away. What walks I took alone! What meals I had in silence and embarrassment! What dull evenings, poring over tables of weights and measures, and what yawns and dozes I lapsed into in spite of all my care! Thus the holidays lagged away, until the morning came when Miss Murdstone gave me the closing cup of tea of the vacation. I was not sorry to go. I had lapsed into a stupid state; but I was recovering a little and looking foward to Steerforth. I kissed my mother, and had climbed into the carrier's cart when I

heard her calling me. I looked back, and she stood at the garden-gate, looking intently at me.

So I lost her. So I saw her afterwards, in my sleep at school, — a silent presence near my bed — looking at me with the same intent face, — and the vision is still a constant blessing to me.

From then I pass over all that happened at Salem House until my birthday in March. On the morning of that day I was summoned into Mr. Creakle's august presence. Mrs. Creakle was in the room too, and somehow they broke it to me that my mother was very ill. I knew all now!

"She is dead," they said.

There was no need to tell me so. I had already broken out into a desolate cry, and felt an orphan in the wide world. If ever child were stricken with sincere grief, I was. But I remember even so, that my sorrow was a kind of satisfaction to me, when I walked in the playground, while the boys were in school, and saw them glancing at me out of the windows, and because of my grief I felt distinguished, and of vast importance. We had no story-telling that night, and Traddles insisted on lending me his pillow as a guarantee of his sympathy, which I understood and accepted.

I left Salem House upon noon the next day, stopping in Yarmouth to be measured for my suit of black. Then all too soon I was at home again, only it was home no longer, for my mother was not there. Mr. Murdstone, who was weeping, took no notice of me. Miss Murdstone gave me her cold fingers, and asked if I had been measured for my mourning, and if I had brought home my shirts. There was no sign that they thought of my suffering, and — alone — except for dear faithful Peggotty, I remained there, motherless, and worse than fatherless, still stunned and giddy with the shock. As soon as the funeral was over, Peggotty obtained

permission to take me home with her for a visit, and I was thankful for the change, even though I knew that Peggotty was leaving the Rookery forever.

We found the old boat the same pleasant place as ever, only little Em'ly and I seldom wandered on the beach now. She had tasks to learn, and needlework to do. During the visit I had a great surprise, which was no less than Peggotty's marriage to the carrier who had taken me on so many trips, and whose affections it seemed, had long been fastened upon Peggotty. He took her to a nice little home, and there she showed me a room which she said would be mine whenever I chose to occupy it. I felt the constancy of my dear old nurse, and thanked her as well as I could, but the next day I was obliged to go back to the Murdstones. Peggotty made the journey with me, and no words can express my forlorn and desolate feelings when the cart took her away again, and I was left alone in the place where I used to be so happy.

And now I fell into a state of neglect, apart from other boys of my own age, and apart from all friendly faces. What would I not have given to have been sent to school! I think Mr. Murdstone's means were straightened at that time, and there was no mention of Salem House or of any other school. I was not beaten or starved, only coldly neglected. Peggotty I was seldom allowed to visit, but once a week she either came to see me or met me somewhere, and that, and the dear old books were my only comfort.

One day Mr. Quinion, a visitor at the house, took pains to ask me some questions about myself, and afterwards Mr. Murdstone called me to him, and said:

"I suppose you know, David, that I am not rich. You have received some considerable education already. Education is costly; and even if I could afford it, I am of opinion that it would not be at all advantageous to you to be kept at

a school. There is before you a fight with the world; and the sooner you begin it the better. You may have heard of the counting house of Murdstone and Grinby, in the wine trade? Mr. Quinion manages the business, and he suggests that it gives employment to some other boys, and that he sees no reason why it should n't give employment to you. You will earn enough to provide for your eating, and drinking, and pocket money. Your lodging will be paid by me. So will your washing. Your clothes will be looked after for you, too," said Mr. Murdstone, "as you will not be able, yet awhile, to get them for yourself. So you are now going to London, David, to begin the world on your own account."

Behold me, on the morrow, in a much-worn little white hat, with a crape band round it, a black jacket, and stiff corduroy trousers! Behold me so attired, and with my little worldly all in a small trunk, sitting, a lone, lorn child, in the post-chaise, journeying to London with Mr. Quinion! Behold me at ten years old, a little labouring hind in Murdstone and Grinby's warehouse on the waterside at Blackfriars! It was a crazy old house with a wharf of its own, but rotting with dirt and age. Their trade was among many kinds of people, chiefly supplying wines and spirits to certain packet ships. My work was pasting labels on full bottles, or fitting corks to them, or sealing the corks, and the work was not half so distasteful as were my companions, far below me in birth and education. The oldest of the regular boys was named Mick Walker, and another boy in my department, on account of his complexion, was called Mealy Potatoes. No words can express the secret agony of my soul as I sunk into this companionship, and thought sadly of Traddles, Steerforth, and those other boys, whom I felt sure would grow up to be great men.

I lodged with a Mr. Micawber who lived in Windsor

Terrace. My pay at the warehouse was six shillings a week. I provided my own breakfast and kept bread and cheese to eat at night. Also, child that I was, — sometimes I could not resist pastry cakes and puddings in the shop windows, all of which made a large hole in my six shillings. From Monday to Saturday I had no advice, no encouragement or help of any kind. I worked with common men and boys, a shabby child. I lounged about the streets, insufficiently and unsatisfactorily fed. But for the mercy of God, I might easily have been, for any care that was taken of me, a little robber or a little vagabond. Yet they were kind to me at the warehouse and that I suffered and was miserably unhappy, no one noticed. I concealed the fact even from Peggotty (partly for love of her, and partly for shame).

I did my work not unskilfully, and though perfectly familiar with my companions, my conduct and manner placed a space between us and I was usually spoken of as the "little Gent." In my desolate condition, I became really attached to the Micawbers, and when they experienced reverses of fortune, and Mr. Micawber was carried off to the Debtors' Prison, I did all that I could for them, and remained with Mrs. Micawber in lodgings near the prison. But I plainly saw that a parting was near at hand, as it was the Micawbers' intention to leave London as soon as Mr. Micawber could free himself. So keen was my dread of lodging with new people, added to the misery of my daily life at the warehouse, that I could not endure the thought, and finally I made a resolution. I would run away!

Many times in the old days, my mother had told me the story of my one relative, Aunt Betsey, who had been present at the time of my birth, confident in her hopes of a niece who should be named for her, Betsey Trotwood, and for whom she proposed to provide liberally. When I, David Copperfield,

came in place of the longed-for niece, Aunt Betsey shook the dust of the place off her feet, and my mother never saw her afterwards. My idea now was to find Aunt Betsey. Not knowing where she lived, I wrote a long letter to Peggotty, and asked in it incidentally if she knew the address, and also if she could lend me half a guinea for a short time. She answered promptly and enclosed the half guinea, saying that Miss Betsey lived just outside of Dover, which place I at once resolved to set out for. However, I considered myself bound to remain at the warehouse until Saturday night; and as when I first came there I had been paid for a week in advance, not to present myself as usual to receive my wages. For this reason I had borrowed the half guinea, that I might have a fund for my travelling expenses.

Accordingly, when Saturday night came, I shook Mick Walker's hand, bade good-night to Mealy Potatoes — and ran away.

My box was at my old lodging, and I had a card ready for it, addressed to "Master David, to be left till called for at the Coach Office, Dover."

I found a young man with a donkey-cart whom I engaged for sixpence, to remove my box, and in pulling the card for it out of my pocket, I tumbled my half guinea out too. I put it in my mouth for safety, and had just tied the card on, when I felt myself violently chucked under the chin by the young man, and saw my half guinea fly out of my mouth into his hand.

"You give me my money back, if you please," said I, very much frightened. "And leave me alone!"

"Come to the pollis," said he; "you shall prove it yourn to the pollis!"

"Give me my box and money, will you?" I cried, bursting into tears.

The young man still replied, "Come to the pollis!'

Then suddenly changed his mind, jumped into the cart, sat upon my box, and exclaiming that he would drive to the pollis straight, rattled away.

I ran after him as fast as I could, narrowly escaping being run over some twenty times in a mile, until I had no breath left to call out with. Now I lost him, now I saw him, but at length, confused and exhausted, I left him to go where he would with my box and money, and, panting and crying, but never stopping, I faced about for Greenwich, and had some wild idea of running straight to Dover. However, my scattered senses were soon collected and I sat down on a doorstep, quite spent. Fortunately, it was a fine summer night, and when I had recovered my breath, I went on again. But I had only three-halfpence in the world, and as I trudged on, I pictured to myself how I should be found dead in a day or two, under some hedge. Passing a little pawnshop, I left my waistcoat, and went on, richer by ninepence, and I foresaw that my jacket would go next, in fact that I should be lucky if I got to Dover in a shirt and a pair of trousers.

It had occurred to me to go on as fast as I could towards Salem House, and spend the night behind the wall at the back of my old school, where there used to be a haystack. I imagined it would be a kind of company to have the boys and the bedroom where I used to tell the stories, so near me. I had a hard day's walk, and with great trouble found Salem House, and the haystack, and lay down outside the dark and silent house. Never shall I forget the lonely sensation of first lying down, without a roof above my head! But at last I slept, and dreamed of old school-days, until the warm beams of the sun, and the rising bell at Salem House awoke me. As none of my old companions could still be there, I had no wish to linger, so I crept away from the wall and struck out into the dusty Dover road.

That day I got through three and twenty miles, and at night I passed over the bridge at Rochester, footsore and tired, eating bread as I walked. There were plenty of signs, "Lodgings for Travellers," but I sought no shelter, fearing to spend the few pence I had. Very stiff and sore of foot I was in the morning, and I felt that I could go only a short distance that day. I took off my jacket, and went into a shop, where I exchanged it finally for one and fourpence. For threepence I refreshed myself completely, and limped seven miles further. I slept under another hay-stack, after washing my blistered feet in a stream, and went on in rather better spirits, coming at last to the bare wide downs near Dover. I then began to inquire of everyone I met, about my aunt, but no one knew her, and finally, when the morning was far spent, in despair I went into a little shop to ask once more. I spoke to the clerk, but a young woman on whom he was waiting, took the inquiry to herself.

"My mistress?" she said. "What do you want with her, boy?"

On my replying that I wished to see Miss Trotwood, the young woman told me to follow her. I needed no second permission, though by this time my legs shook under me. Soon we came to a neat little cottage with cheerful bow-windows, in front of it a gravelled court, full of flowers.

"This is Miss Trotwood's," said the young woman, and then she hurried in, and left me standing at the gate. My shoes were by this time in a woeful condition, my hat was crushed and bent, my shirt and trousers stained and torn, my hair had known no comb or brush since I left London, my face, neck, and hands, from unaccustomed exposure, were burnt to a berry-brown. From head to foot I was powdered with dust. In this plight I waited to introduce myself to my formidable aunt.

As I waited, there came out of the house a lady with a handkerchief tied over her cap, a pair of gardening gloves on her hands, and carrying a great knife. I knew her immediately, for she stalked out of the house exactly as my mother had so often described her stalking up our garden at home.

"Go away!" said Miss Betsey, shaking her head, and waving her knife. "Go along! No boys here!"

I watched her, with my heart at my lips, as she stopped to dig up a root. Then I went up and touched her.

"If you please, ma'am," I began.

She started, and looked up.

"If you please, aunt."

"Eh?" exclaimed Miss Betsey, in a tone of amazement I have never heard approached.

"If you please, aunt, I am your nephew."

"Oh, Lord!" said my aunt. And sat down flat in the garden-path.

"I am David Copperfield, of Blunderstone, in Suffolk — where you came, on the night when I was born, and saw my dear mama. I have been very unhappy since she died. I have been slighted and taught nothing, and thrown upon myself, and put to work not fit for me. It made me run away to you. I was robbed at first setting out, and have walked all the way, and have never slept in a bed since I began the journey." Here my self-support gave way all at once, and I broke into a passion of crying.

My aunt sat on the gravel, staring at me, until I began to cry, when she got up in a great hurry, collared me, and took me into the parlour. Her first proceeding there was to unlock a tall press, bring out several bottles, and pour some of the contents of each into my mouth. I think they must have been taken out at random, for I am sure I tasted ani-

seed water, anchovy sauce, and salad dressing. Then she put me on a sofa with a shawl under my head, and a handkerchief under my feet, lest I should soil the cover, and then, sitting down so I could not see her face, she ejaculated "Mercy on us!" at regular intervals.

After a time she rang a bell, and a grey-headed, florid old gentleman, called Mr. Dick, who had the appearance of a grown-up boy, and who lived with my aunt, appeared. When my aunt asked his opinion about what to do with me, his advice was to wash me.

This Janet, the maid, was preparing to do, when suddenly my aunt became, in one moment, rigid with indignation, and cried out, "Janet! Donkeys!"

Upon which, Janet came running as if the house were in flames, and darted out on a little piece of green in front, to warn off two donkeys, lady ridden, while my aunt seized the bridle of a third animal, laden with a child, led him from the sacred spot, and boxed the ears of the unlucky urchin in attendance.

To this hour I do not know whether my aunt had any lawful right of way over that patch of green, but she had settled it in her own mind that she had, and it was all the same to her. The passage of a donkey over that spot was the one great outrage of her life. In whatever occupation or conversation she was engaged, a donkey turned the current of her ideas, and she was upon him straight. Jugs of water were kept in secret places ready to be discharged on the offenders, sticks were laid in ambush behind the doors; sallies were made at all hours, and incessant war prevailed, which was perhaps an agreeable excitement to the donkey boys.

The bath was a great comfort, for I began to feel acute pains in my limbs, and was so tired that I could scarcely keep awake for five minutes together. Enrobed in clothes

belonging to Mr. Dick, and tied up in great shawls, I fell asleep, on the sofa, and only awoke in time to dine off a roast fowl and pudding, while my aunt asked me a number of questions, and spoke of my mother and Peggotty, and in the afternoon we talked again and there was another alarm of Donkeys.

After tea we sat at the window until dusk, and shortly afterwards I was escorted up to a pleasant room at the top of the house. When I had said my prayers, and the candle had burnt out, I lay there yielding to a sensation of profound gratitude and rest, nestling in the snow white sheets, and I prayed that I might never be houseless any more, and might never forget the houseless.

At breakfast the following day, I found myself the object of my aunt's most rigid scrutiny.

"Hallo!" she said, after a time to attract my attention, and when I looked up she told me that she had written Mr. Murdstone in regard to me, under which information I became heavy of heart, for I felt that some efforts would be made to force me to return to the warehouse, while the more I saw of my aunt, the more sure I felt that she was the one with whom I wished to stay; that with all her eccentricities and humours, she was one to be honoured and trusted in.

On the second day after my arrival, my Aunt gave a sudden alarm of donkeys, and to my consternation I beheld Miss Murdstone ride over the sacred piece of green, and stop in front of the house.

"Go along with you!" cried my aunt, shaking her head and her fist at the window. "You have no business there. How dare you trespass? Oh! you bold-faced thing!"

I hurriedly told her who the offender was, and that Mr. Murdstone was behind her, but Aunt Betsey was frantic, and cried, "I don't care who it is — I won't allow it! Go away!

Janet, lead him off!" and from behind my aunt, I saw the donkey pulled round by the bridle, while Mr. Murdstone tried to lead him on, and Miss Murdstone struck at Janet with a parasol, and several boys shouted vigorously. But my aunt suddenly discovering the donkey's guardian to be one of the most inveterate offenders against her, rushed out and pounced upon him, while the Murdstones waited until she should be at leisure to receive them. She marched past them into the house, a little ruffled by the combat, and took no notice of them until they were announced by Janet.

"Shall I go away, aunt?" I asked trembling.

"No, sir," said she. "Certainly not!" With which she pushed me into a corner, and fenced me in with a chair, as if it were a prison, and there I stayed. There were several sharp passages at arms between my aunt and the Murdstones, when my past, and my mother's life came up for discussion. Finally Mr. Murdstone said:

"I am here to take David back, Miss Trotwood; to dispose of him as I think proper, and to deal with him as I think right. I am not here to make any promise to anybody. You may possibly have some idea, Miss Trotwood, of abetting him in his running away, and in his complaints to you. Now, I must caution you, that if you abet him once, you abet him for good and all. I cannot trifle, or be trifled with. I am here, for the first and last time, to take him away. Is he ready to go? If you tell me he is not, it is indifferent to me on what pretence, — my doors are shut against him henceforth, and yours, I take it for granted are open to him."

My aunt had listened with the closest attention, her hands folded on her knee, and looking grimly at the speaker. When he had finished, she turned to Miss Murdstone, and said:

"Well, ma'am, have *you* got anything to remark?"

As she had not, my aunt turned to me.

"And what does the boy say?" she said. "Are you ready to go, David?"

I answered no, and entreated her not to let me go. I begged and prayed my aunt to befriend and protect me, for my father's sake.

My aunt consulted for a moment with Mr. Dick, and then she pulled me towards her, and said to Mr. Murdstone:

"You can go when you like; I 'll take my chance with the boy. If he 's all you say he is, at least I can do as much for him then, as you have done. But I don't believe a word of it."

There were some additional words on both sides, and then the Murdstones stood ready to leave.

"Good day, sir," said my aunt "and good-bye! Good day to you too, ma'am," — turning suddenly upon his sister. "Let me see you ride a donkey over my green again, and as sure as you have a head upon your shoulders, I 'll knock your bonnet off, and tread upon it!"

The manner and matter of this speech were so fiery, that Miss Murdstone without a word in answer, discreetly put her arm through her brother's, and walked hastily out of the cottage, my aunt remaining at the window, prepared in case of the donkey's re-appearance, to carry her threat into execution. No attempt at defiance being made, however, her face gradually relaxed, and became so pleasant, that I was emboldened to kiss and thank her; which I did with great heartiness. She then told me that she wished my name to be changed to Trotwood Copperfield, and this notion so pleased her, that some ready-made clothes purchased for me that very day, were marked "Trotwood Copperfield," in indelible ink before I put them on, and it was settled that all my clothes thereafter should be marked in the same way.

Thus I began my new life in a new name, and with everything new about me. For many days I felt that it was all a dream, and then the truth came over me in waves of joy that it was no dream, but blessed, blessed reality!

Aunt Betsey soon sent me to Doctor Strong's excellent school at Canterbury. It was decorously ordered on a sound system, with an appeal in everything to the honour and good faith of the boys. We all felt that we had a part in the management of the place, and learnt with a good will, desiring to do it credit. We had noble games out of hours, and plenty of liberty, and the whole plan of the school was as superior to that of Salem House as can be imagined. I soon became warmly attached to the place, the teachers, and the boys, and in a little while the Murdstone and Grinsby life became so strange that I hardly believed in it. Of course I wrote to Peggotty, relating my experiences, and how my aunt had taken me under her care, and returning the half guinea I had borrowed, and Peggotty answered promptly, but although she expressed herself as glad in my gladness, I could see that she did not take quite kindly to my Aunt as yet.

The days glide swiftly on. I am higher in the school,—I am growing great in Latin verse, think dancing school a tiresome affair, and neglect the laces of my boots. Doctor Strong refers to me publicly as a promising young scholar, at which my aunt remits me a guinea by the next post.

The shade of a young butcher crosses my path. He is the terror of Doctor Strong's young gentlemen, whom he publicly disparages. He names individuals (myself included) whom he could undertake to settle with one hand, and the other tied behind him. He waylays the smaller boys to punch their unprotected heads, and calls challenges after me in the streets. For these reasons, I resolve to fight the butcher.

We meet by appointment with a select audience. Soon, I

don't know where the wall is, or where I am, or where anybody is, but after a bloody tangle and tussle in the trodden grass, feeling very queer about the head, I awake, and augur justly that the victory is not mine. I am taken home in a sad plight, to have beef-steaks put to my eyes, and am rubbed with vinegar and brandy, and find a great white puffy place on my upper lip, and for several days I remain in the house with a green shade over my eyes, and yet feeling that I did right to fight the butcher.

I change more and more, and now I am the head boy. I wear a gold watch and chain, a ring upon my little finger, and a long-tailed coat. I am seventeen, and am smitten with a violent passion for the eldest Miss Larkins, who is about thirty. She amuses herself with me as with a new toy, wears my ring for a season, and then announces her engagement to a Mr. Chestle. I am terribly dejected for a week or two, then I rally, become a boy once more, fight the butcher again, gloriously defeat him, and feel better,—and soon my school days draw to a close.

My aunt and I had many grave deliberations on the calling to which I should devote myself, but could come to no conclusion, as I had no particular liking that I could discover, for any profession. So my aunt proposed that while I was thinking the matter over, I take a little trip, a breathing spell, as it were.

"What I want you to be, Trot," said my aunt,—"I don't mean physically, but morally; you are very well physically—is, a firm fellow, a fine, firm fellow, with a will of your own, with determination. With character, Trot, with strength of character that is not to be influenced, except on good reason, by anybody, or by anything. That's what I want you to be."

I intimated that I hoped I should be what she described, and she added that it was best for me to go on my trip alone, to learn to rely upon myself.

So I was fitted out with a handsome purse of money, and tenderly dismissed upon my expedition, promising to write three times a week, and to be back in a month's time.

I went first to say farewell to Doctor Strong, and then took my seat on the box of the London coach. It was interesting to be sitting up there, behind four horses; well educated, well dressed, with plenty of money, and to look out for the places where I had slept on my weary journey. I stretched my neck eagerly, looking for old landmarks, and when we passed Salem House I fairly tingled with emotion. At Charing Cross I stopped at the Golden Cross, and as soon as I had taken a room, ordered my dinner, trying to appear as old and dignified as possible. In the evening I went to the Covent Garden Theatre, and saw Julius Cæsar and a pantomime. It was new to me, and the mingled reality and mystery of the whole show, lights, music, company, and glittering scenery, were so dazzling that when I went out at midnight into the rain, I felt as if I had been for a time an inmate of another world, and was so excited that instead of going to my room in the hotel I ordered some porter and oysters, and sat revolving the glorious visions in my mind until past one o'clock. Presently, I began to watch a young man near me whose face was very familiar. Finally, I rose, and with a fast-beating heart said,

"Steerforth, won't you speak to me?"

He quickly glanced up, but there was no recognition in his face.

"My God," he suddenly exclaimed, "It's little Copperfield!"

Then ensued a violent shaking of hands, and a volley of questions on both sides. He was studying at Oxford, but was on his way to visit his mother, who lived just out of London. He was as handsome, and fascinating, and gay, as ever, in fact quite bewilderingly so to me; and all those things which I en-

joyed, he pronounced dreadful bores, quite like a man of the world. However, we got on famously, and when he invited me to go with him to his home at Highgate, I accepted with pleasure, and spent a delightful week there in the genteel, old-fashioned, quiet home. At the end of the week, Steerforth decided to go with me to Yarmouth, so we travelled on together to the inn there, and took rooms.

As early as possible the next day, I visited Peggotty. She did not recognise me after our seven years' separation, but when at last it dawned on her who I was, she cried, "My darling boy!" and we both burst into tears, and were locked in one another's arms as though I were a child again.

That evening Steerforth and I went to see Mr. Peggotty and my other friends in the boat, and we were so warmly received that it was nearly midnight when we took our leave. We stayed in Yarmouth for more than a fortnight, and I made many pilgrimages to the dear haunts of my childhood, particularly to that place where my mother and father lay, and mingled with my sad thoughts were brighter ones, about my future — and of how in it I was to become a man of whom they might have been proud.

At the end of the fortnight came a letter from Aunt Betsey, saying that she had taken lodgings for a week in London, and that if I would join her, we could discuss her latest plan for me, which was that I become a proctor in Doctors' Commons.

I mentioned the plan to Steerforth, and he advised me to take kindly to it, and by the time that I reached London I had made up my mind to do so. My aunt was greatly pleased when I told her this, whereupon I proceeded to add that my only objection to the plan lay in the great expense it would be to article me, — a thousand pounds at least. I spoke of her past liberality to me, and asked her whether I had not better choose some work which required less expensive preliminaries.

For a time my aunt was deep in thought. Then she replied:

"Trot, my child, if I have any object in life, it is to provide for your being a good, sensible, and happy man. I am bent upon it. It's in vain, Trot, to recall the past, unless it has some influence upon the present. Perhaps I might have been better friends with your father and mother. When you came to me, a little runaway boy, perhaps I thought so. From that time until now, Trot, you have ever been a credit to me, and a pride and pleasure. I have no other claim upon my means, — and you are my adopted child. Only be a loving child to me in my old age, and bear with my whims and fancies, and you will do more for an old woman whose prime of life was not so happy as it might have been, than ever that old woman did for you."

It was the first time I had heard my aunt refer to her past history. Her quiet way of doing it would have exalted her in my respect and affection, if anything could.

"All is agreed and understood between us now, Trot," she said, "and we need talk of this no more. Give me a kiss, and we'll go to the Commons in the morning."

And accordingly at noon the next day we made our way to Doctors' Commons, interviewed Mr. Spenlow, of the firm of Spenlow and Jorkins, and I was accepted on a month's probation as an articled clerk. Mr. Spenlow then conducted me through the Court, that I might see what sort of a place it was. Then my aunt and I set off in search of lodgings for me, and before night I was the proud and happy owner of the key to a little set of chambers in the Adelphi, conveniently situated near the Court, and to my taste in all ways. Seeing how enraptured I was with them, my aunt took them for a month, with the privilege of a year, made arrangements with the landlady about meals and linen, and I was to take possession in two days;

during which time I saw Aunt Betsey safely started on her homeward journey towards Dover, dreading to leave me, but exulting in the coming discomfiture of the vagrant donkeys.

It was a wonderfully fine thing to have that lofty castle to myself, and when I had taken possession and shut my outer door, I felt like Robinson Crusoe, when he had got within his fortification, and pulled his ladder up after him. I felt rich, powerful, old, and important, and when I walked out about town, with the keys of my house in my pocket, and able to ask any fellow to come home with me, without giving anybody any inconvenience, I became a quite different personage than ever heretofore.

Whatever there was of happiness or of sorrow, of success or of failure, in my later life, does not belong on these pages. The identity of the child, and of the boy, David Copperfield is now forever merged in the personality of — Trotwood Copperfield, Esquire, householder and Man.

KIT NUBBLES

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CHRISTOPHER, or Kit Nubbles, as he was commonly called, was not handsome in the estimation of anyone except his mother, and mothers are apt to be partial. He was a shock-headed, shambling, awkward lad, with an uncommonly wide mouth, very red cheeks, a turned-up nose, and certainly the most comical expression of face I ever saw.

He was errand-boy at the Old Curiosity Shop, and deeply attached to both little Nell Trent and her grandfather, his employer. And just here let me explain that Nell's grandfather led a curious sort of double life; his days were spent in the shop, but when night fell, he invariably took his cloak, his hat, and his stick, and kissing the child, passed out, leaving her alone through the long hours of the night, and Nell had no knowledge that in those nightly absences he was haunting the gaming table; risking large sums, and ever watching with feverish anticipation for the time when he should win a vast fortune to lay by for the child, his pet and darling, to keep her from want if death should take him away. But of this little Nell knew nothing, or she would have implored him to give up the wicked and dangerous pastime.

Nor did she know that it was from Quilp, a strange, rich, little dwarf, who had many trades and callings, that her grandfather was borrowing the money which he staked nightly in hopes of winning more, pledging his little stock as security for the debt.

It was a lonely life that Nell led, with only the old man for companion, so she had a genuine affection for the awkward

errand-boy, Christopher, who was one of the few bits of comedy in her days, and his devotion to her verged on worship. One morning Nell's grandfather sent her with a note to the little dwarf, Quilp; and Kit, who escorted her, while he waited for her, got into a tussle with Quilp's boy, who asserted that Nell was ugly, and that she and her grandfather were entirely in Quilp's power.

That was too much for Kit to bear in silence, and he retorted that Quilp was the ugliest dwarf that could be seen anywheres for a penny.

This enraged Quilp's boy, who sprang upon Kit, and the two were engaged in a hand-to-hand fight, when Quilp appeared and separated them, asking the cause of the quarrel, and was told that Kit had called him, "The ugliest dwarf that could be seen anywheres for a penny." Poor Kit never dreamed that his unguarded remark was to be treasured up against him in the mind of the jealous, vindictive, little dwarf, and used to separate him from his idolised mistress and her grandfather, but it was even so, for there was a power of revenge, a hatred, in the tiny body of the dwarf, entirely out of proportion to his size.

Quilp at this time desired to injure the old man and his grandchild, and soon made several discoveries in a secret way, which, added to what he found out from little Nell's own artless words about her home life, and her grandfather's habits, enabled him to put two and two together, and guess correctly for what purpose the old man borrowed such large sums from him, and he refused him further loans. More than this, he told the old man that he (Quilp) held a bill of sale on his stock and property, and that he and little Nell would be henceforth homeless and penniless.

The old man pleaded, with agony in his face and voice for one more advance, — one more trial, — but Quilp was firm.

"Who is it?" retorted the old man, desperately, "that, notwithstanding all my caution, told you? Come, let me know the name, — the person."

The crafty dwarf stopped short in his answer, and said, —

"Now, who do you think?"

"It was Kit. It must have been the boy. He played the spy, and you tampered with him."

"How came you to think of him?" said the dwarf. "Yes, it was Kit. Poor Kit!" So saying, he nodded in a friendly manner, and took his leave; stopping when he passed the outer door a little distance, and grinning with extraordinary delight.

"Poor Kit!" muttered Quilp. "I think it was Kit who said I was an uglier dwarf than could be seen anywhere for a penny, was n't it? Ha, ha, ha! Poor Kit!"

And with that he went his way, still chuckling as he went.

That evening Kit spent in his own home. The room in which he sat down, was an extremely poor and homely place, but with that air of comfort about it, nevertheless, which cleanliness and order can always impart in some degree. Late as the Dutch clock showed it to be, Kit's mother was still hard at work at an ironing-table; a young child lay sleeping in a cradle near the fire; and another, a sturdy boy of two or three years old, very wide awake, was sitting bolt upright in a clothes-basket, staring over the rim with his great round eyes. It was rather a queer-looking family; Kit, his mother, and the children, being all strongly alike.

Kit was disposed to be out of temper, but he looked at the youngest child, and from him to his other brother in the clothes-basket, and from him to his mother, who had been at work without complaint since morning, and thought it would be a better and kinder thing to be good-humoured. So he rocked the cradle with his foot, made a face at the rebel in the clothes-

basket, which put him in high good-humour directly, and stoutly determined to be talkative, and make himself agreeable.

"Did you tell me just now, that your master had n't gone out to-night?" inquired Mrs. Nubbles.

"Yes," said Kit, "worse luck!"

"You should say better luck, I think," returned his mother, "because Miss Nelly won't have been left alone."

"Ah!" said Kit, "I forgot that. I said worse luck, because I 've been watching ever since eight o'clock, and seen nothing of her. Hark, what 's that?"

"It 's only somebody outside."

"It 's somebody crossing over here," said Kit, standing up to listen, "and coming very fast too. He can't have gone out after I left, and the house caught fire, mother!"

The boy stood for a moment, really bereft, by the apprehension he had conjured up, of the power to move. The footsteps drew nearer, the door was opened with a hasty hand, and the child herself, pale and breathless, hurried into the room.

"Miss Nelly! What is the matter?" cried mother and son together.

"I must not stay a moment," she returned, "grandfather has been taken very ill. I found him in a fit upon the floor."

"I 'll run for a doctor —" said Kit, seizing his brimless hat. "I 'll be there directly, I 'll —"

"No, no," cried Nell, "there is one there, you 're not wanted, you — you — must never come near us any more!"

"What!" roared Kit.

"Never again," said the child. "Don't ask me why, for I don't know. Pray don't ask me why, pray don't be sorry, pray don't be vexed with me! I have nothing to do with it indeed!

"He complains of you and raves of you," added the child, "I don't know what you have done, but I hope it's nothing very bad."

"*I* done!" roared Kit.

"He cries that you're the cause of all his misery," returned the child, with tearful eyes. "He screamed and called for you; they say you must not come near him, or he will die. You must not return to us any more. I came to tell you. I thought it would be better that I should. Oh, Kit, what *have* you done? You, in whom I trusted so much, and who were almost the only friend I had!"

The unfortunate Kit looked at his young mistress harder and harder, and with eyes growing wider and wider, but was perfectly motionless and still.

"I have brought his money for the week," said the child, looking to the woman, and laying it on the table, — "and — and — a little more, for he was always good and kind to me. I hope he will be sorry and do well somewhere else and not take this to heart too much. It grieves me very much to part with him like this, but there is no help. It must be done. Good-night!"

With the tears streaming down her face, and her slight figure trembling with intense agitation, the child hastened to the door, and disappeared as rapidly as she had come.

The poor woman, who had no cause to doubt her son, but every reason for relying on his honesty and truth, was staggered, notwithstanding, by his not having advanced one word in his own defence.

Visions of gallantry, knavery, robbery, flocked into her brain and rendered her afraid to question him. She rocked herself upon a chair, wringing her hands and weeping bitterly. The baby in the cradle woke up and cried; the boy in the clothes-basket fell over on his back with the basket on

him, and was seen no more; the mother wept louder yet and rocked faster; but Kit, insensible to all the din and tumult, remained in a state of utter stupefaction.

Of course, after that there was nothing for him to do but to keep as far away as possible from the shop, which he did, except in the evenings, when he often stole beneath Nell's window on a chance of merely seeing her. One night he was rewarded by a scrap of whispered conversation with her from her window. She told him how sick her grandfather had been, and over and over Kit reiterated all there was for him to say — that he had done nothing to cause that sickness.

"He 'll be sure to get better now," said the boy, anxiously, "when he does, say a good word — say a kind word for me, Miss Nell!"

"They tell me I must not even mention your name to him for a long, long time," rejoined the child. "I dare not; and even if I might, what good would a kind word do you, Kit? We shall be very poor they say. We shall scarcely have bread to eat, for everything has been taken from us."

"It 's not that I may be taken back," said the boy. "No, it 's not that. It is n't for the sake of food and wages that I 've been waiting about in hopes of seeing you. Don't think that I 'd come in a time of trouble to talk of such things as them. It 's something very different from that. Perhaps he might think it over-venturesome of me to say — well then, — to say this," said Kit, with sudden boldness. "This home is gone from you and him. Mother and I have got a poor one, and why not come there, till he 's had time to look about and find a better? You think," said the boy, "that it 's very small and inconvenient. So it is, but it 's very clean. Do try, Miss Nell, do try. The little front room upstairs

is very pleasant. Mother says it would be just the thing for you, and so it would; and you 'd have her to wait upon you both, and me to run errands. We don't mean money, bless you; you 're not to think of that! Will you try him, Miss Nell? Only say you 'll try him. Do try to make old master come, and ask him first what I have done. Will you only promise that, Miss Nell?"

The street door opened suddenly just then, and, conscious that they were overheard, Nell closed her window quickly, and Kit stole away. And that was his last view of his beloved mistress, for shortly afterwards the Old Curiosity Shop was vacant of its tenants. Little Nell and her grandfather had quietly slipped away, under cover of night, to face their poverty in a new place; where, no one knew or could find out; and all that remained to Kit to remind him of his past, was Nell's bird, which he rescued from the shop, (now in Quilp's hands), took home, and hung in his window, to the immeasurable delight of his whole family.

It now remained for Kit to find a new situation, and he roamed the city in search of one daily. He was quite tired out with pacing the streets, to say nothing of repeated disappointments, and was sitting down upon a step to rest, one day, when there approached towards him a little clattering, jingling, four-wheeled chaise, drawn by a little obstinate-looking, rough-coated pony, and driven by a little placid-faced old gentleman. Beside the little old gentleman sat a little old lady, plump and placid like himself. As they passed where he sat, Kit looked so wistfully at the little turnout, that the old gentleman looked at him. Kit rising and putting his hand to his hat, the old gentleman intimated to the pony that he wished to stop, to which proposal the pony graciously acceded.

"I beg your pardon, sir," said Kit. "I 'm sorry you

stopped, sir. I only meant, did you want your horse minded."

"I 'm going to get down in the next street," returned the old gentleman. "If you like to come on after us, you may have the job."

Kit thanked him, and joyfully obeyed, and held the refractory little beast until the little old lady and little old gentleman came out, and the old gentleman, taking his seat and the reins again, put his hand in his pocket to find a sixpence for Kit. Not a sixpence could he find, and he thought a shilling too much, but there was no shop in the street to get change at, so he gave it to the boy.

"There," he said jokingly, "I 'm coming here again next Monday at the same time, and mind you 're here, my lad, to work it out!"

"Thank you, sir," said Kit. "I 'll be sure to be here."

He was quite serious, but they laughed heartily at his saying so, and then the pony started off on a brisk trot, and Kit was left alone. Having expended his treasure in such purchases as he knew would be most acceptable at home, not forgetting some seed for the bird, he hastened back as fast as he could.

Day after day, as he bent his steps homeward, returning from some new effort to procure employment, Kit raised his eyes to the window of the little room he had so much commended to the child Nell, and hoped to see some indication of her presence.

"I think they must certainly come to-morrow, eh, mother?" said Kit, laying aside his hat with a weary air, and sighing as he spoke. "They have been gone a week. They surely could n't stop away more than a week, could they now?"

The mother shook her head, and reminded him how often

he had been disappointed already, and Kit, looking very mournful, clambered up to the nail, took down the cage, and set himself to clean it, and to feed the bird. His thoughts reverting from this occupation to the little old gentleman who had given him the shilling, he suddenly recollected that that was the very day — nay, nearly the very hour — at which the old gentleman had said he should be at the Notary's office again. He no sooner remembered this, than hastily explaining the nature of his errand, he went off at full speed to the appointed place, and although when he arrived there it was full two minutes after the time set, there was as yet no pony-chaise to be seen. Greatly relieved, Kit leaned against a lamp-post to take breath, and waited. Before long the pony came trotting round the corner of the street, and behind him sat the little old gentleman, and the little old lady.

Upon the pony's refusing to stand at the proper place, the old gentleman alighted to lead him; whereupon the pony darted off with the old lady, and stopped at the right house, leaving the old gentleman to come panting on behind.

It was then that Kit presented himself at the pony's head, and touched his hat with a smile.

"Why, bless me," cried the old gentleman, "the lad *is* here! My dear, do you see?"

"I said I 'd be here, sir," said Kit, patting Whisker's neck. "I hope you 've had a pleasant ride, sir. He 's a very nice little pony."

"My dear," said the old gentleman. "This is an uncommon lad; a good lad, I 'm sure."

"I 'm sure he is," rejoined the old lady. "A very good lad, and I am sure he is a good son."

Kit acknowledged these expressions of confidence by touching his hat again and blushing very much. Then the old gentleman helped the old lady out, and they went into the

office — talking about him as they went, Kit could not help feeling, and a few minutes later he was called in.

Kit entered in a great tremor, for he was not used to going among strange ladies and gentlemen, and the tin boxes and bundles of dusty papers had in his eyes an awful and a venerable air. Mr. Witherden, the notary, was a bustling gentleman, who talked loud and fast.

"Well, boy," said Mr. Witherden, "you came to work out that shilling, — not to get another, hey?"

"No indeed, sir," replied Kit, taking courage to look up. "I never thought of such a thing."

"Now," said the old gentleman, Mr. Garland, when they had asked some further questions of Kit, "I am not going to give you anything." "But," he added, "perhaps I may want to know something more about you, so tell me where you live."

Kit told him, and the old gentleman wrote down the address with his pencil. He had scarcely done so, than there was a great uproar in the street, and the old lady, hurrying to the window, cried that Whisker had run away, upon which Kit darted out to the rescue, and the others followed. Even in running away, however, Whisker was perverse, for he had not gone far when he suddenly stopped. The old lady then stepped into her seat, and Mr. Abel, her son, whom they had come to fetch, into his. The old gentleman took his place also, and they drove away, more than once turning to nod kindly to Kit, as he watched them from the road.

When Kit reached home, to his amazement he found the pony and his owners there too.

"We are here before you, you see, Christopher," said Mr. Garland, smiling.

"Yes, sir," said Kit, and as he said it, he looked towards his mother for an explanation of the visit.

"The gentleman 's been kind enough, my dear," said she, "to ask me whether you were in a good place, or in any place at all, and when I told him no, he was so good as to say that — "

"That we wanted a good lad in our house," said the old lady and the old gentleman both together, "and that perhaps we might think of it, if we found everything as we would wish it to be."

As this thinking of it plainly meant the thinking of engaging Kit, he immediately fell into a great flutter; for the little old couple were very methodical and cautious, and asked so many questions that he began to be afraid there was no chance of his success; but to his surprise at last he found himself formally hired at an annual income of Six Pounds, over and above his board and lodging, by Mr. and Mrs. Garland, of Abel Cottage, Finchley; and it was settled that he should repair to his new abode on the next day but one.

"Well, mother," said Kit, hurrying back into the house, after he had seen the old people to their carriage, "I think my fortune 's about made now."

"I should think it was indeed, Kit!" rejoined his mother. "Six pound a year! Only think!"

"Ah!" said Kit, trying to maintain the gravity which the consideration of such a sum demanded, but grinning with delight in spite of himself. "There 's a property! Please God, we 'll make such a lady of you for Sundays, mother! such a scholar of Jacob, such a child of the baby, such a room of the one upstairs! Six pound a year!"

The remainder of that day, and the whole of the next, were a busy time for the Nubbles family, to whom everything connected with Kit's outfit and departure was matter of as great moment as if he had been about to penetrate into the interior of Africa, or to take a cruise round the world. It would be difficult to suppose that there ever was a box which was opened

and shut so many times within four-and-twenty hours as that which contained his wardrobe and necessaries; and certainly there never was one which to two small eyes presented such a mine of clothing as this mighty chest, with its three shirts, and proportionate allowance of stockings and pocket-handkerchiefs, disclosed to the astonished vision of little Jacob.

At last, after many kisses and hugs and tears, Kit left the house on the next morning, and set out to walk to Finchley.

He wore no livery, but was dressed in a coat of pepper-and-salt, with waistcoat of canary colour, and nether garments of iron-grey; besides these glories, he shone in the lustre of a new pair of boots and an extremely stiff and shiny hat. And in this attire, rather wondering that he attracted so little attention, he made his way towards Abel Cottage.

It was a beautiful little cottage, with a thatched roof and little spires at the gable-ends, and pieces of stained glass in some of the windows. On one side of the house was a little stable, just the size for the pony, with a little room over it, just the size for Kit. White curtains were fluttering, and birds in cages were singing at the windows; plants were arranged on either side of the path, and clustered about the door; and the garden was bright with flowers in full bloom, which shed a sweet odour all around.

Everything within the house and without seemed to be the perfection of neatness and order. Kit looked about him, and admired, and looked again, before he could make up his mind to turn his head and ring the bell.

He rung the bell a great many times, and yet nobody came. But at last, as he was sitting upon the box thinking about giants' castles, and princesses tied up to pegs by the hair of their heads, and dragons bursting out from behind gates, and other incidents of a like nature, common in story-books to

youths on their first visit to strange houses, the door was gently opened, and a little servant-girl, very tidy, modest, and pretty, appeared.

"I suppose you 're Christopher, sir?" said the servant-girl.

Kit got off the box, and said yes, he was, and was ushered in.

The old gentleman received him very kindly, and so did the old lady, whose previous good opinion of him was greatly enhanced by his wiping his boots on the mat. He was then taken into the parlour to be inspected in his new clothes; and then was shown the garden and his little room, and when the old gentleman had said all he had to say in the way of promise and advice, and Kit had said all he had to say in the way of assurance and thankfulness, he was handed over again to the old lady, who, summoning the little servant-girl (whose name was Barbara), instructed her to take him downstairs and give him something to eat and drink after his walk.

From that time Kit's was a useful, pleasant life, moving on in a peaceful routine of duties and innocent joys from day to day, and from week to week, — until the great, longed-for epoch of his life arrived — the day of receiving, for the first time, one-fourth part of his annual income of Six Pounds. It was to be a half-holiday, devoted to a whirl of entertainments, and little Jacob was to know what oysters meant, and to see a play.

The day arrived, and was n't Mr. Garland kind when he said to him, — "Christopher, here 's your money, and you have earned it well;" — which praise in itself was worth as much as his wages.

Then the play itself! The horses which little Jacob believed from the first to be alive, — and the ladies and gentlemen, of whose reality he could be by no means persuaded, having never

seen or heard anything at all like them — the firing, which made Barbara (who had a holiday too) wink — the forlorn lady who made her cry — the tyrant who made her tremble — the clown who ventured on such familiarities with the military man in boots — the lady who jumped over the nine-and-twenty ribbons and came down safe upon the horse's back — everything was delightful, splendid, and surprising! Little Jacob applauded until his hands were sore; Kit cried "an-kor" at the end of everything; and Barbara's mother beat her umbrella on the floor, in her ecstasies, until it was nearly worn down to the gingham.

What was all this though — even all this — to the extraordinary dissipation that ensued, when Kit, walking into an oyster-shop, as bold as if he lived there, led his party into a box — a private box, fitted up with red curtains, white tablecloth, and cruet-stand complete — and ordered a fierce gentleman with whiskers, who acted as waiter, and called him "Christopher Nubbles, sir," to bring three dozen of his largest-size oysters, and look sharp about it! Then they fell to work upon the supper in earnest; and ate and laughed and enjoyed themselves so thoroughly that it did Kit good to see them, and made him laugh and eat likewise, from strong sympathy. But the greatest miracle of the night was little Jacob, who ate oysters as if he had been born and bred to the business. There was the baby, too, who sat as good as gold, trying to force a large orange into his mouth, and gazing intently at the lights in the chandelier, — there he was, sitting in his mother's lap, and making indentations in his soft visage with an oyster-shell, so contentedly that a heart of iron must have loved him! In short, there never was a more successful supper; and when Kit proposed the health of Mrs. and Mr. Garland, there were not six happier people in the world. But all happiness has an end, and as it was now growing late, they agreed that it was

time to turn their faces homeward — and the great day was at an end.

One morning just before this, when Kit was out exercising the pony, he was called into the office where he had first seen Mr. and Mrs. Garland, to be examined by a strange gentleman concerning what he knew of little Nell and her grandfather. The gentleman told Kit that he was trying by every means in his power to discover their hiding-place; and, finally, after Kit had repeated all that he could remember of the life and words of his beloved Miss Nelly and the old man, the stranger slipped a half-crown into his hand and dismissed him. The strange gentleman liked Kit so much that he desired to have him in his own service, but the boy stoutly refused to leave his kind employer. At Mr. Garland's suggestion, however, he offered his services to the stranger for an hour or two every day, and from that came trouble to Kit.

Each day, going up and down, to and from the stranger's room, he had to pass through the office of one Sampson Brass, attorney; who, through the agency of Quilp, who was Sampson Brass's best client, was prejudiced against Kit, and pledged to the little dwarf to do him all the injury that he could, for venomous little Quilp had never forgiven the boy who had been connected with his ruined client, and had called him "the ugliest dwarf to be seen for a penny"; and he desired vengeance at any cost.

Every time that Kit passed through the office, Mr. Brass spoke kindly to him, and not seldom gave him half-crowns, which made Kit, who from the first had disliked the man, think that he had misjudged him. Then one day when Kit had been minding the office a few moments for Mr. Brass, and was running towards home, in haste to do his work there, Mr. Brass and his clerk, Dick Swiveller, rushed out after him.

"Stop!" cried Sampson, laying his hand on one shoulder,

while Mr. Swiveller pounced upon the other. "Not so fast, sir. You 're in a hurry?"

"Yes, I am," said Kit, looking from one to the other in great surprise.

"I — I — can hardly believe it," panted Sampson, "but something of value is missing from the office. I hope you don't know what."

"Know what! good heaven, Mr. Brass!" cried Kit, trembling from head to foot; "you don't suppose —"

"No, no," rejoined Brass, quickly, "I don't suppose anything. You will come back quietly, I hope?"

"Of course I will," returned Kit. "Why not?"

Kit did turn from white to red, and from red to white again, when they secured him, each by an arm, and for a moment he seemed disposed to resist. But, quickly recollecting himself, and remembering that if he made any struggle, he would perhaps be dragged by the collar through the public streets, he suffered them to lead him off.

"Now, you know," said Brass, when they had entered the office, and locked the door, "if this is a case of innocence, Christopher, the fullest disclosure is the best satisfaction for everybody. Therefore, if you 'll consent to an examination, it will be a comfortable and pleasant thing for all parties."

"*SEARCH ME*," said Kit, proudly, holding up his arms. "But mind, sir, — I know you 'll be sorry for this to the last day of your life."

"It is certainly a very painful occurrence," said Brass, with a sigh, but commencing the search with vigour. All at once an exclamation from Dick Swiveller and Miss Brass, Sampson's sister, who was also present, cut the lawyer short. He turned his head, and saw Dick, who had been holding Kit's hat, standing with the missing bank-note in his hand.

"In the hat?" cried Brass, in a sort of shriek.

"*Under the handkerchief, and tucked beneath the lining*," said Mr. Swiveller, aghast, at the discovery. Mr. Brass looked at him, at his sister, at the walls, at the ceiling, at the floor, everywhere but at Kit, who stood quite stupefied and motionless.

Like one entranced, he stood, eyes wide opened, and fixed upon the ground, until the constable came, and he found himself being driven away in a coach, to the jail, where he was lodged for the night — still dazed by the terrible change in his affairs.

It was a long night, but Kit slept, and dreamed too — always of being at liberty. At last the morning dawned, and the turnkey who came to unlock his cell, and show him where to wash, told him that there was a regular time for visiting every day, and that if any of his friends came to see him, he would be fetched down to the grate, and that he was lodged apart from the mass of prisoners, because he was not supposed to be utterly depraved and irreclaimable. Kit was thankful for this indulgence, and sat reading the Church Catechism, until the man entered again.

"Now then," he said. "Come on!"

"Where to, sir?" asked Kit.

The man contented himself by briefly replying "Wisitors," and led Kit down behind a grating, outside which, and beyond a railing, Kit saw with a palpitating heart, his mother with the baby in her arms; and poor little Jacob, who, when he saw his brother, and thrusting his arms between the rails to hug him, found that he came no nearer, began to cry most piteously, whereupon Kit's mother burst out sobbing and weeping afresh. Poor Kit could not help joining them, and not a word was spoken for some time.

"Oh, my darling Kit!" said his mother at last. "That I should see my poor boy here!"

"You don't believe that I did what they accuse me of, mother, dear?" cried Kit, in a choking voice.

"I, believe it!" exclaimed the poor woman. "I, that never knew you tell a lie or do a bad action from your cradle. I believe it of the son that's been a comfort to me from the hour of his birth until this time! *I* believe it of *you*, Kit!"

"Why then, thank God!" said Kit. "Come what may, I shall always have one drop of happiness in my heart when I think that you said that."

At this the poor woman fell a-crying again, and soon, all too soon, the turnkey cried "Time's up!" and Kit was taken off in an instant, with a blessing from his mother and a scream from little Jacob ringing in his ears.

Eight weary days dragged themselves along, and on the ninth the case of Christopher Nubbles came up in Court; and the aforesaid Christopher was called upon to plead guilty or not guilty to an indictment for that he, the aforesaid Christopher, did feloniously abstract and steal from the dwelling-house and office of one Sampson Brass, gentleman, one bank-note for five pounds, issued for Governor and Company of the Bank of England.

By a cleverly worked-up case on his opponent's side, Kit is so cross-examined as to be found guilty by the jury, and is sentenced to be transported for a term of years.

Kit's mother, poor woman, is waiting, and when the news is told a sad interview ensues. "*He never did it!*" she cries.

"Well," says the turnkey, "I won't contradict you. It's all one now, whether he did it or not."

"Some friend will rise up for us, mother," cried Kit. "I am sure. If not now, before long. My innocence will come out, mother, and I shall be brought back again, I feel confident of that. You must teach little Jacob and the baby how all this was, for if they thought I had ever been dishonest,

when they grew old enough to understand, it would break my heart to know it, if I was thousands of miles away. Oh, is there no good gentleman here who will take care of her!"

In all Kit's life that was the darkest moment, when he saw his mother led away, half fainting, and heard the grating of his cell door as he entered — entangled in a network of false evidence and treachery from which there seemed no way of escape.

Meanwhile, however, while Kit was being found guilty, a young servant in the employ of the Brasses was also guilty of listening at keyholes, listening to a conversation which was not intended for her ears, in which she heard the entire plot by which Mr. Brass had entrapped and condemned Kit. How he had himself placed the money in Kit's hat while it lay upon the office table; and how the whole plan had been successful. The small servant, friendly to Kit, and hating her employers, lost no time in repeating what she had heard to Mr. Garland, and he, the notary, and the strange gentleman, after carefully arranging their plan, confronted the Brasses with evidence of their guilt so overwhelmingly true, that they could do nothing but confess their crime, and Kit's innocence, while Mr. Garland hastened to him with the glad news of his freedom.

Lighted rooms, bright fires, cheerful faces, the music of glad voices, words of love and welcome, warm hearts and tears of happiness — what a change is this! But it is to such delights that Kit is hastening. They are awaiting him, he knows. He fears he will die of joy before he gets among them.

When they are drawing near their journey's end he begs they may go more slowly, and when the house appears in sight that they may stop, — only for a minute or two, to give him time to breathe.

But there is no stopping then, for they are already at the garden gate. Next minute they are at the door. There is a noise of tongues and a tread of feet inside. It opens. Kit rushes in and finds his mother clinging round his neck. And there is Mrs. Garland, neater and nicer than ever, fainting away stone dead with nobody to help her; and there is Mr. Abel violently blowing his nose and wanting to embrace everybody; and there is the strange gentleman hovering round them all, and there is that good, dear little Jacob sitting all alone by himself on the bottom stair, with his hands on his knees, like an old man, roaring fearfully without giving any trouble to anybody; and each and all of them are for the time clean out of their wits.

Well! In the next room there are decanters of wine, and all that sort of thing set out as grand as if Kit and his friends were first-rate company; and there is little Jacob walking, as the popular phrase is, into a home-made plum cake at a most surprising rate, and keeping his eye on the figs and oranges which are to follow.

Kit no sooner comes in than the strange gentleman drinks his health, and tells him he shall never want a friend as long as he lives, and so does Mr. Garland, and so does Mrs. Garland, and so does Mr. Abel. But even this honour and distinction is not all, for the strange gentleman forthwith pulls out of his pocket a massive silver watch — and upon the back of this watch is engraved Kit's name with flourishes all over — and in short it is Kit's watch, bought expressly for him. Mr. and Mrs. Garland can't help hinting about their present, in store, and Mr. Abel tells outright that he has his; and Kit is the happiest of the happy.

There is one friend that Kit has not seen yet, and he takes the first opportunity of slipping away and hurrying to the stable, and when Kit goes up to caress and pat him, the pony

rubs his nose against his coat and fondles him more lovingly than ever pony fondled man. It is the crowning circumstance of his earnest, heartfelt reception; and Kit fairly puts his arm round Whisker's neck and hugs him.

Happy Christopher! — the darkest days of his life are past — the brightest are yet to be. Let us wish him all joy and prosperity and leave him on the threshold of manhood!

JO, THE CROSSING SWEEPER

Jo, the Crossing Sweeper.

JO, THE CROSSING SWEEPER

JO lives in a ruinous place, known to the likes of him by the name of Tom-all-Alone's. It is a black dilapidated street, avoided by all decent people; where the crazy houses were seized upon when their decay was far advanced, by some bold vagrants, who, after establishing their possession, took to letting them out in lodgings.

Jo sweeps his crossing all day long, and if he is asked a question he replies that he "don't know nothink." He knows that it's hard to keep the mud off the crossing in dirty weather, and harder still to live by doing it. Nobody taught him that much — he found it out.

Indeed, everything poor Jo knows he has had to find out for himself, for no one has even taken the trouble to tell him his real name.

It must be a strange state to be like Jo, not to know the feeling of a whole suit of clothes — to wear even in summer the same queer remnant of a fur cap; to be always dirty and ragged; to shuffle through the streets, unfamiliar with the shapes, and in utter darkness as to the meaning, of those mysterious symbols so abundant over the doors and at corners of the streets, and on the doors and in the windows. To see people read, and to see people write, and to see the postman deliver letters, and not to have the least idea of all that language, — to be to all of it stone blind and dumb.

It must be very puzzling to be hustled and jostled, and moved on, and to really feel that I have no business here or there or anywhere; and yet to be perplexed by the considera-

tion that I *am* here somehow, too, and everybody overlooked me until I became the creature that I am.

One cold winter night when Jo was shivering near his crossing, a stranger passed him; turned, looked at him intently, then came back and began to ask him questions from which he found out that Jo had not a friend in the world.

"Neither have I, not one," added the man, and gave him the price of a supper and lodging. And from that day Jo was no longer friendless, for the stranger often spoke to him, and asked him whether he slept sound at night, and how he bore cold and hunger; and whether he ever wished to die; and other strange questions. Then when the man had no money he would say, "I am as poor as you to-day, Jo," but when he had any he always shared it with Jo.

But there came a time not long after this, when the stranger was found dead in his bed, in the house of Crook, the rag-and-bottle merchant, where he had lodgings; and nothing could be found out about his life or the reason for his sudden death. So a jury had to be brought together to ferret out the mystery, if possible, and to discover whether the man's death was accidental or whether he died by his own hand. No one knew him, and he had never been seen talking to a human soul except the boy that swept the crossing, down the lane over the way, round the corner, — otherwise Jo.

So Jo was called in as a witness at the inquest. Says the coroner, "Is that boy here?"

Says the beadle, "No, sir, he is not here."

Says the coroner, "Go and fetch him then."

"Oh, here 's the boy, gentlemen!"

Here he is, very muddy, very hoarse, very ragged. Now, boy! But stop a minute. Caution. This boy must be put through a few preliminary paces.

Name Jo. Nothink else that he knows on. Don't know

that everybody has two names. Don't know that Jo is short for a longer name. Thinks it long enough for him. Spell it? No. He can't spell it. No father, no mother, no friends. Never been to school. What's home? Knows a broom's a broom, and knows it's wicked to tell a lie. Don't recollect who told him about the broom or about the lie, but knows both. Can't exactly say what'll be done to him after he's dead if he tells a lie to the gentleman here, but believes it'll be something wery bad to punish him, and so he'll tell the truth. "He wos wery good to me, he wos," added the boy, wiping his eyes with his wretched sleeves. "When I see him a-laying so stritched out just now, I wished he could have heerd me tell him so. He wos wery good to me, he wos."

The jury award their verdict of accidental death, and the stranger is hurried into a pine box and into an obscure corner of that great home for the friendless and unmourned, — the Potter's field, — and night falls, hiding from sight the new-made grave.

With the night comes a slouching figure through the tunnel court, to the outside of the iron gate of the Potter's field. It holds the gate with its hands, and looks in between the bars. Stands looking in for a little while. It then takes an old broom it carries, softly sweeps the step, and makes the arch-way clean. It does so very busily and trimly; looks in again a little while, and so departs.

Jo, is it thou? Well, well?

Though thou art neither a gentleman nor the son of a gentleman, there is an expression of gratitude and of loyalty, worthy of gentle blood, indicative of noble character, in thy muttered reason for this: —

"He wos wery good to me, he wos."

Once more without a friend, Jo sweeps his crossing day

after day. Before the stranger came into his life, he had drifted along in his accustomed place, more unreasoning than an intelligent dog; but the hand of a human comrade had been laid in his, and it had awakened his humanity; and now as he sweeps he thinks — about the stranger — wonders where he has gone to, and how he died.

As it seemed to Jo that the world was bounded on all sides by the events in Tom-all-Alone's, he was not at all surprised one day to have another stranger come to his crossing and ask him many questions concerning the dead man. He was glad to talk of him, to tell again all that he knew of his life and death, and to show where they had buried him. The interview over, Jo is overwhelmed to find his hand closed over a piece of money larger than he has ever owned before.

His first proceeding is to hold the piece of money to the gas-light, and to be overpowered at finding that it is yellow gold. His next is to give it a one-sided bite at the edge, as a test of its quality. His next, to put it in his mouth for safety, and to sweep the step and passage with great care. His job done, he sets off for Tom-all-Alone's, stopping in the light of innumerable gas-lamps to produce the piece of gold, and give it another one-sided bite as a reassurance of its being genuine; and then shuffles off, back to his crossing; little dreaming — poor Jo! — that because of his presence at the inquest, and because of this interview, the rest of his existence is to be even more wretched than his past has been. He little dreams that persons great and powerful in the outer world were connected with the secret of his friend's life and death; but it is even so, and those who fear to have anything brought to light concerning him, hire officers to hunt Jo away from Tom-all-Alone's, — the only home he has ever known, — to keep him as far out of reach as possible, because he knew more about the stranger than any one else. He does not understand it at all, but from that

minute there seems always to be an officer in sight telling him to "move on."

At a summons to his shop one day, Mr. Snagsby, the law-stationer (in whose employ the dead man was, and who has always been kind to Jo when chance has thrown him in his way), descends to find a police constable holding a ragged boy by the arm. "Why, bless my heart," says Mr. Snagsby, "what's the matter?"

"This boy," says the constable, calmly, "although he's repeatedly told to, won't move on."

"I'm always a-moving on, sir," cries the boy, wiping away his grimy tears with his arm. "Where can I possibly move to more nor I do?"

"Don't you come none of that, or I shall make blessed short work of you," says the constable, giving him a passionless shake. "My instructions are that you are to move on."

"But where?" cries the boy.

"Well, really, constable, you know," says Mr. Snagsby, "really that *does* seem a question. Where, you know?"

"My instructions don't go to that," replies the constable. "My instructions are that this boy is to move on, and the sooner you're five miles away the better for all parties."

Jo shuffles away from the spot where he has been standing, picking bits of fur from his cap and putting them in his mouth; but before he goes Mr. Snagsby loads him with some broken meats from the table, which he carries away hugging in his arms.

Jo goes on, down to Blackfriars Bridge, where he finds a baking stony corner wherein to settle his repast. There he sits munching and gnawing — the sun going down, the river running fast, the crowd flowing by him in two streams — everything passing on to some purpose, and to one end, until he is stirred up, and told to move on again.

Desperate with being moved on so many times, Jo tramps out of London down to St. Albans, where, exhausted from hunger and from exposure to extreme cold, he takes refuge in the cottage of a bricklayer's wife. A young lady who happens to be making a charity call on the woman in the cottage — sees his feverish, excited condition, and questions him.

"I am a-being froze," said the boy hoarsely, with his haggard gaze wandering about. "And then burnt up, and then froze, and then burnt up, ever so many times in an hour, and my head's all sleepy, and all a-going mad like — I'm so dry — and my bones is n't half as much bones as pains."

"When did he come from London?" the young lady asked.

"I come from London yesterday," said the boy himself, now flushed and hot. "I'm a-going somewheres. Somewheres," he repeated in a louder tone. "I have been moved on and moved on, more nor I wos afore. Mrs. Snagsby, she's allus a-watching and a-driving of me. What have I done to her? And they're all a-watching and a-driving of me. Everyone of them's doing of it from the time when I don't get up to the time when I don't go to bed. And I'm a-going somewheres, that's where I'm a-going!"

So in an oblivious half-insensible way he shuffled out of the house. The young lady hurried after him, and presently came up with him. He must have begun his journey with some small bundle under his arm, and must have lost it or had it stolen, for he still carried his wretched fragment of a fur cap like a bundle, though he went bareheaded through the rain, which now fell fast.

He stopped when she called him, standing with his lustrous eyes fixed on her, and even arrested in his shivering fit. She urged him to go with her, and though at first he shook his

head, at last he turned and followed her. She led the way to her home, where the servants, sorry for his pitiable condition, made a bed for him in a warm loft-room by the stable, where he was safely housed for the night and cared for.

The next morning the young lady was awakened at an early hour by an unusual noise outside her window, and called out to one of the men to know the meaning of it.

"It's the boy, miss," said he.

"Is he worse?" she asked.

"Gone, miss!"

"Dead?"

"Dead, miss? No. Gone clean off!"

At what time of the night he had gone, or how or why, it seemed hopeless ever to divine. Every possible inquiry was made, and every place searched. The brick-kilns were examined, the cottages were visited, the woman was particularly questioned, but she knew nothing of him; the weather had been for some time too wet, and the night itself had been too wet, to admit of any tracing of footsteps. Hedge and ditch, and wall and rick, and stack were examined for a long distance round, lest the boy should be lying in such a place insensible or dead; but nothing was seen to indicate that he had ever been near. From the time when he left the loft-room he vanished, and after five days the search was given up as hopeless. Where had poor Jo moved on to now?

For some time it seemed that no one would ever know, but at last, not so very long after this, a physician, Allan Woodcourt by name — who had known something of Jo and his story — was wandering at night in the miserable streets of Tom-all-Alone's, impelled by curiosity to see its haunts by gas-light. After stopping to offer assistance to a woman sitting on a doorstep, who had evidently come a long distance, he walks away, and as he does so he sees a ragged figure

coming very cautiously along, crouching close to the walls. It is the figure of a youth whose face is hollow, and whose eyes have an emaciated glare. He is so intent on getting along unseen, that even the apparition of a stranger in whole garments does not tempt him to look back. Allan Woodcourt pauses to look after him, with a shadowy belief that he has seen the boy before. He cannot recall how or where, but there is some association in his mind with such a form.

He is gradually emerging from Tom-all-Alone's in the morning light, thinking about it, when he hears running feet behind him, and, looking around, sees the boy scouring toward him at a great speed, followed by the woman.

"Stop him! stop him!" cries the woman; "stop him, sir!"

Allan, not knowing but that he has just robbed her of her money, follows in chase, and runs so hard that he runs the boy down a dozen times; but each time the boy makes a curve, ducks, dives under his hands, and scours away again. At last the fugitive, hard pressed, takes to a narrow passage which has no thoroughfare. Here he is brought to bay, and tumbles down, lying down gasping at his pursuer until the woman comes up.

"Oh you Jo," cries the woman, "what, I have found you at last!"

"Jo?" repeats Allan, looking at him with attention, — "Jo? Stay — to be sure, I recollect this lad, some time ago, being brought before the coroner!"

"Yes, I see you once afore at the Inkwich," whimpered the boy. "What of that? Can't you never let such an unfortnet as me alone? An't I unfortnet enough for you yet? How unfortnet do you want me for to be? I've been a-chivied and a-chivied, fust by one on you and nixt by another on you, till I 'm worritted to skins and bones. The Inkwich war n't my fault; I done nothink. He wos very

good to me he wos; he wos the only one I knowed to speak to me as ever come across my crossing. It ain't very likely I should want him to be Inkwich'd. I only wish I wos myself!"

He says it with such a pitiable air that Allan Woodcourt is softened toward him. He says to the woman, "What has he done?"—to which she only replies, shaking her head,—

"Oh you Jo! you Jo! I have found you at last!"

"What has he done?" says Allan. "Has he robbed you?"

"No, sir, no. Robbed me? He did nothing but what was kind-hearted by me, and that's the wonder of it. But he was along with me, sir, down at St. Albans, ill, and a young lady — Lord bless her for a good friend to me! — took pity on him and took him home — took him home and made him comfortable; and like a thankless monster he ran away in the night and never has been seen or heard from since, till I set eyes on him just now. And the young lady, that was such a pretty dear, caught his illness, lost her beautiful looks, and would n't hardly be known for the same young lady now. Do you know it? You ungrateful wretch, do you know that this is all along of her goodness to you?" demands the woman.

The boy, stunned by what he hears, falls to smearing his dirty forehead with his dirty palm, and to staring at the ground, and to shaking from head to foot.

"You hear what she says!" Allan says to Joe. "You hear what she says, and I know it's true. Have you been here ever since?"

"Wishermaydie if I seen Tom-all-Alone's till this blessed morning," replies Jo, hoarsely.

"Why have you come here now?"

Jo looks all around and finally answers, "I don't know

how to do nothink and I can't get nothink to do. I 'm very poor and ill and I thought I 'd come back here when there war n't nobody about and lay down and hide somewheres as I knows on till arter dark, and then go and beg a trifle of Mr. Snagsby. He wos allus willing fur to give me something, he wos, though Mrs. Snagsby, she wos allus a-chivying me — like everybody everywheres."

"Now, tell me," proceeds Allan, "tell me how it came about that you left that house when the good young lady had been so unfortunate as to pity you and take you home?"

Jo suddenly came out of his resignation, and excitedly declares that he never known about the young lady; that he would sooner have hurt his own self, and that he 'd sooner have had his unfortnet head chopped off than ever gone a-nigh her; and that she wos wery good to him she wos.

Allan Woodcourt sees that this is not a sham.

"Come, Jo, tell me," he urged.

"No, I durst n't," says Jo. "I durst n't or I would."

"But I must know," returns Allan, "all the same. Come, Jo!"

After two or three such adjurations, Jo lifts up his head again, and says in a low voice, "Well, I 'll tell you something. I was took away. There!"

"Taken away? — In the night?"

Ah! very apprehensive of being overheard, Jo looks about him, and even glances up some ten feet at the top of the boarding, and through the cracks in it, lest the object of his distrust should be looking over, or hidden on the other side.

"Who took you away?"

"I durst n't name him," says Jo. "I durst n't do it, sir."

"But I want, in the young lady's name, to know. You may trust me. No one else shall hear."

"Ah, but I don't know," replies Jo, shaking his head fear-

fully, "as he don't hear. He 's in all manner of places all at wunst."

Allan looks at him in perplexity, but discovers some real meaning at the bottom of this bewildering reply. He patiently awaits an explicit answer, and Jo, more baffled by his patience than by anything else, at last desperately whispers a name in his ear.

"Aye," says Allan. "Why, what had you been doing?"

"Nothink, sir. Never done nothink to get myself into no trouble 'cept in not moving on, and the Inkwich. But I 'm moving on now. I 'm moving on to the berryin'-ground — that 's the move as I 'm up to."

"No, no. We will try to prevent that. But what did he do with you?"

"Put me in a horspittle," replies Jo, whispering, "till I wor discharged, then gave me a little money. 'Nobody wants you here,' he ses. 'You go and tramp,' he ses. 'You move on,' he ses. 'Don't let me ever see you nowheres within forty mile of London, or you 'll repent it.' So I shall if ever he does see me, and he 'll see me if I 'm above ground," concludes Jo.

Allan considers a little, then remarks, turning to the woman, "He is not so ungrateful as you supposed. He had a reason for going away, though it was an insufficient one."

"Thank 'ee, sir, thank 'ee!" exclaims Jo. "There, now, see how hard you was on me. But on'y you tell the young lady wot the genlmn ses, and it 's all right. For you wos wery good to me, too, and I knows it."

"Now, Jo," says Allan, "come with me and I will find you a better place than this to lie down and hide in."

And Jo, repeating, "On'y you tell the young lady as I never went for to hurt her, and what the genlmn ses," nods and shambles and shivers and smears and blinks, and half-

laughs and half-cries a farewell to the woman, and takes his creeping way after Allan Woodcourt.

In a quiet, decent place, among people whom he knows will only treat the boy with kindness, Allan finds Jo a room.

"Look here, Jo," says Allan, "this is Mr. George. He is a kind friend to you, for he is going to give you a lodging here. You are quite safe here. All you have to do at present is to be obedient, and to get strong; and mind you tell us the truth here, whatever you do, Jo."

"Wishermaydie if I don't, sir," says Jo, reverting to his favourite declaration. "I never done nothink yet but wot you knows on to get myself into no trouble. I never wos in no other trouble at all, sir, 'cept not knowing nothink and starwation."

"I believe it," said Allan; "and now you must lie down and rest."

"Let me lay here quiet, and not be chivied any more," falters Jo, after he has been assisted to his bed and given medicine; "and be so kind any person as is a-passing nigh where I used fur to sweep, as to say to Mr. Snagsby that Jo, wot he knowed wunst, is a-movin' on right forards with his duty, and I 'll be wery thankful!"

At the boy's request, later, Mr. Snagsby is sent for, and Jo is very glad to see his old friend, and says when they are alone that he "takes it uncommon kind as Mr. Snagsby should come so far out of his way on account of sich as him."

"Mr. Snagsby," says Jo, "I went and give an illness to a lady, and none of 'em never says nothink to me for having done it, on account of their being so good and my having been so unfortnet. The lady come herself and see me yes'day, and she ses, 'Jo,' she ses, 'we thought we 'd lost you, Jo,' she ses; and she sits down a-smilin' so quiet, and don't pass a word nor yit a look upon me for having done it, she don't; and I turns

agin the wall, I doos, Mr. Snagsby. And Mr. Woodcot, he come to give me somethink to ease me, wot he 's allus a-doing on day and night, and wen he come over me and a-speakin' up so bold, I see his tears a-fallin', Mr. Snagsby."

After this, Jo lies in a stupor most of the time, and Allan Woodcourt, coming in a little later, stands looking down on the wasted form, thinking of the thousands of strong, merry boys to whom the story of Jo's life would sound incredible. As he stands there, Jo rouses with a start.

"Well, Jo, what is the matter? Don't be frightened."

"I thought," says Jo, who had stared and is looking around, "I thought I wos in Tom-all-Alone's again. Ain't there nobody here but you, Mr. Woodcot?"

"Nobody."

"And I ain't took back to Tom-all-Alone's. Am I, sir?"

"No."

Jo closes his eyes, muttering, "I 'm wery thankful!"

After watching him closely for a little while, Allan puts his mouth very near his ear, and says to him in a low, distinct voice:

"Jo, did you ever know a prayer?"

"Never knowed nothink, sir!"

"Not so much as one short prayer?"

"No, sir. Nothink at all, sir. Mr. Chadbands he wos a-praying wunst at Mr. Snagsby's, and I heerd him, but he sounded as if he wos a-speaking to hisself and not to me. He prayed a lot, but I could n't make out nothink on it. I never knowed wot it wos all about."

It takes him a long time to say this, and few but an experienced and attentive listener could hear, or hearing understand him. After a short relapse into sleep or a stupor he makes of a sudden a strong effort to get out of bed.

"Stay, Jo, what now?"

"It's time for me to go to that there berrying-ground, sir," he returned with a wild look.

"Lie down and tell me what burying-ground, Jo."

"Where they laid him as wos wery good to me; wery good to me indeed he wos! It's time for me to go down to that there berrying-ground and ask to be put along with him. I wants to go there and be berried. He used fur to say to me, 'I am as poor as you to-day, Jo,' he says. I wants to tell him that I am as poor as him now, and have come there to be laid along with him."

"By-and-by, Jo, by-and-by."

"Ah! P'raps they would n't do it if I wos to go myself. But will you promise to have me took there, sir, and laid along with him?"

"I will, indeed!"

"Thank 'ee, sir. Thank 'ee, sir. They 'll have to get the key of the gate afore they can take me in, for it 's always locked. And there 's a step there as I used fur to clean with my broom. It 's turned very dark, sir. Is there any light a-coming?"

"It is coming fast, Jo, my poor fellow."

"I hear you, sir, in the dark, but I 'm a-gropin' — a-gropin' — let me catch hold of your hand!"

"Jo, can you say what I say?"

"I 'll say anythink as you say, sir, fur I knows it 's good."

"OUR FATHER,"

"Our Father — yes, that 's wery good, sir."

"WHICH ART IN HEAVEN,"

"Art in Heaven — is the light a-coming, sir?"

"It is close at hand — HALLOWED BE THY NAME."

"Hallowed be — thy —"

The light is come upon the dark benighted way. The bewildering path is cleared of shadows at last. Jo has moved on to a home prepared by Eternal Love for such as he.

PAUL DOMBEY

Paul Dombey and his Sister.

PAUL DOMBEY

AS Mrs. Dombey died when little Paul was born, upon Mr. Dombey — the pompous head of the great firm Dombey and Son — fell the entire responsibility of bringing up his two children, Florence, then eight years of age, and the tiny boy, Paul.

Of Florence he took little notice; girls never seemed to him to be of any special use in the world, but Paul was the light of his eyes, his pride and joy, and in the delicate child with his refined features and dreamy eyes, Mr. Dombey saw the future representative of the firm, and his heir as well; and he could not do enough for the boy who was to perpetuate the name of Dombey after him. It seemed to Mr. Dombey that any one so fortunate as to be born his son could not but thrive in return for so great a favour. So it was a blow to him that Paul did not grow into a burly, hearty fellow. All their vigilance and care could not make him a sturdy boy.

He was a pretty little fellow, though there was something wan and wistful in his small face. His temper gave abundant promise of being imperious in after life; and he had as hopeful an apprehension of his own importance, and the rightful subservience of all other things and persons to it as heart could wish. He was childish and sportive enough at times, and not of a sullen disposition; but he had a strange, old-fashioned, thoughtful way, at other times of sitting brooding in his miniature arm-chair. At no time did he fall into it so surely as when after dinner he sat with his father by the fire. They were the strangest pair at such a time that ever fire-light shone upon. Mr. Dombey so erect and solemn, gazing at the blaze; Paul

with an old, old face peering into the red perspective with the fixed and rapt attention of a sage, the two so much alike and yet so monstrously contrasted. On one of these occasions, when they had both been perfectly quiet for a long time, little Paul broke the silence thus:

"Papa, what's money?"

The abrupt question took Mr. Dombey by surprise.

"What is money, Paul?" he answered, "Money?"

"Yes," said the child, laying his hands upon the elbows of his little chair, and turning his face up towards Mr. Dombey. "What is money?"

Mr. Dombey was in a difficulty. He would have liked to give him some explanation, involving the terms, currency, bullion, rates of exchange, etc., but he feared he might not be understood, so he answered:

"Gold and silver and copper. Guineas, shillings, halfpence. You know what they are?"

"Oh yes, I know what they are," said Paul. "I don't mean that, papa. I mean what is money after all?"

"What is money after all!"—said Mr. Dombey, backing his chair a little, that he might the better gaze at the presumptuous atom who propounded such an inquiry.

"I mean, papa, what can it do?" returned Paul.

Mr. Dombey patted him on the head. "You'll know better by-and-by, my man," he said. "Money, Paul, can do anything."

"Anything, papa?"

"Yes, anything—almost," said Mr. Dombey.

"Why didn't money save me my mama?" returned the child. "It isn't cruel, is it?"

"Cruel?" said Mr. Dombey. "No. A good thing can't be cruel."

"If it's a good thing and can do anything," said the little

fellow, thoughtfully, as he looked back at the fire, "I wonder why it did n't save me my mama."

He did n't ask the question of his father this time. Perhaps he had seen, with a child's quickness, that it had already made his father uncomfortable. But he repeated the thought aloud, as if it was quite an old one to him, and had troubled him very much.

"It can't make me strong and quite well, either, papa; can it?" asked Paul, after a short silence; rubbing his tiny hands.

"You are as strong and well as such little people usually are? Eh?" said Mr. Dombey.

"Florence is older than I am, but I 'm not as strong and well as Florence, I know," returned the child; "I am so tired sometimes," said little Paul, "and my bones ache so that I don't know what to do."

The unusual tone of that conversation so alarmed Mr. Dombey that the very next day he began to inquire into the real state of Paul's health; and as the doctor suggested that sea-air might be of benefit to the child, to Brighton he was promptly sent, to remain until he should seem benefited. He refused to go without Florence to whom he clung with a passion of devotion which made Mr. Dombey both irritated and jealous to see, wishing himself to absorb the boy's entire affection.

So to Brighton Paul and Florence went, in charge of Paul's nurse, Wickam. They found board in the house of an old lady, Mrs. Pipchin by name, whose temper was not of the best and whose methods of managing children were rather peculiar.

At this exemplary old lady, Paul would sit staring in his little armchair for any length of time. He never seemed to know what weariness was when he was looking fixedly at

Mrs. Pipchin. He was not fond of her, he was not afraid of her, but she seemed to have a grotesque attraction for him.

Once she asked him, when they were alone, what he was thinking about.

"You," said Paul, without the least reserve.

"And what are you thinking about me?" asked Mrs. Pipchin.

"I'm thinking how old you must be," said Paul.

"You must n't say such things as that, young gentleman," returned the dame.

"Why not?" asked Paul.

"Because it 's not polite," said Mrs. Pipchin, snappishly.

"Not polite?" said Paul.

"No."

"It 's not polite," said Paul innocently, "to eat all the mutton-chops and toast, Wickam says."

"Wickam," retorted Mrs. Pipchin colouring, "is a wicked, impudent, bold-faced hussy."

"What 's that?" inquired Paul.

"Never you mind, sir," retorted Mrs. Pipchin. "Remember the story of the little boy that was gored to death by a mad bull for asking questions."

"If the bull was mad," said Paul, "how did he know that the boy had asked questions? Nobody can go and whisper secrets to a mad bull. I don't believe that story."

"You don't believe it, sir?" repeated Mrs. Pipchin, amazed.

"No," said Paul.

"Not if it should happen to have been a tame bull, you little infidel?" said Mrs. Pipchin.

As Paul had not considered the subject in that light, he allowed himself to be put down for the present. But he sat

turning it over in his mind with such an obvious intention of fixing Mrs. Pipchin presently, that even that hardy old lady deemed it prudent to retreat until he should have forgotten the subject.

From that time Mrs. Pipchin appeared to have something of the same odd kind of an attraction towards Paul as Paul had towards her. She would make him move his chair to her side of the fire, instead of sitting opposite, and there he would remain studying every line of Mrs. Pipchin's face, while the old black cat lay coiled up on the fender purring and winking at the fire, and Paul went on studying Mrs. Pipchin and the cat and the fire, night after night, as if they were a history of necromancy in three volumes.

At the end of a week, as Paul was no stronger, though he looked much healthier in the face, a little carriage was got for him, in which he could be wheeled down to the seaside. Consistent in his odd tastes, the child set aside a ruddy faced lad, who was proposed as the drawer of this carriage, and selected instead, his grandfather, Glubb by name, a weazen, old, crab-faced man, in a suit of battered oilskins, who smelt like a weedy sea-beach when the tide is out. With this notable attendant to pull him along and Florence always by his side, he went down to the margin of the ocean every day; and there he would sit or lie in his carriage for hours together, never so distressed as at the company of children.

He had even a dislike at such times to the company of nurse Wickham, and was well pleased when she strolled away. His favourite spot was quite a lonely one, far away from most loungers, and with Florence sitting by his side at work, or reading to him, and the wind blowing on his face, and the water coming up among the wheels of his bed, he wanted nothing more.

For a year the children stayed at Brighton, going home but

twice during that time for a few days, but every Sunday Mr. Dombey spent with them at the Brighton Hotel.

During the year Paul had grown strong enough to give up his carriage, though he still looked thin and delicate, and still remained the same dreamy, quiet child that he had been when consigned to Mrs. Pipchin's care.

At length, on a Saturday afternoon, Mr. Dombey appeared with the news that he was thinking of removing Paul to the school of one Doctor Blimber, also at Brighton.

"I have had some communication with the doctor, Mrs. Pipchin," said Mr. Dombey, "and he does not think Paul at all too young for his purposes. My son is getting on, Mrs. Pipchin, really he is getting on.

"Six years old!" said Mr. Dombey, settling his neck-cloth. "Dear me! six will be changed to sixteen before we have time to look about us; and there is no doubt, I fear, that in his studies he is behind many children of his age — or his youth," said Mr. Dombey — "his youth is a more appropriate expression.

"Now, Mrs. Pipchin, instead of being behind his peers, my son ought to be before them, far before them. There is an eminence ready for him to mount on. There is nothing of chance or doubt before my son. The education of such a young gentleman must not be delayed. It must not be left imperfect. It must be very steadily and seriously undertaken, Mrs. Pipchin."

"Well, sir," said Mrs. Pipchin, "I can say nothing to the contrary." And so to Doctor Blimber's Paul was sent.

The doctor's was a mighty fine house fronting the sea. Upon its doorstep one day Paul stood with a fluttering heart, and with his small right hand in his father's. His other hand was locked in that of Florence. The doctor was sitting in his portentous study, with a globe at each knee, books

all round him, Homer over the door and Minerva on the mantel-shelf.

Paul being somewhat too small to be seen from where the doctor sat, over the books on his table, the doctor made several futile attempts to get a view of him round the legs; which Mr. Dombey perceiving, relieved the doctor from his embarrassment by taking Paul up in his arms, and sitting him on another little table in the middle of the room.

"Ha!" said the doctor, leaning back in his chair. "Now I see my little friend. How do you do, my little friend?"

"V—ery well, I thank you, sir," returned Paul.

"Ha!" said Doctor Blimber. "Shall we make a man of him?"

"Do you hear, Paul?" added Mr. Dombey, Paul being silent.

"I had rather be a child," replied Paul.

"Indeed!" said the doctor. "Why?"

The child made no audible answer, and Doctor Blimber continued, "You would wish my little friend to acquire — ?"

"*Everything*, if you please, doctor," returned Mr. Dombey, firmly.

"Yes," said the doctor. "Yes, exactly. Ha! We shall impart a great variety of information to our little friend, and bring him quickly forward."

At this moment Mrs. Blimber entered, followed by her daughter, and they were duly presented to the Dombeys. There was no light nonsense about Miss Blimber. She kept her hair short and crisp and wore spectacles.

Mrs. Blimber, her mama, was not learned herself, but she pretended to be, and that did quite as well. She said at evening parties, that if she could have known Cicero, she thought she could have died content. It was the steady joy of her life to see the doctor's young gentlemen go out walking, in the

largest possible shirt-collars and the stiffest possible cravats. It was so classical, she said.

After the introductions were accomplished Mrs. Blimber, took Mr. Dombey upstairs to inspect the dormitories. While they were gone Paul sat upon the table, holding Florence by the hand, and glancing timidly from the doctor round and round the room, while the doctor held a book from him at arm's length and read.

Presently Mr. Dombey and Mrs. Blimber returned.

"I hope, Mr. Dombey," said the doctor laying down his book, "that the arrangements meet with your approval?"

"They are excellent, sir," said Mr. Dombey, and added, "I think I have given all the trouble I need, and may now take my leave. Paul my child, good-bye."

"Good-bye, papa."

The limp and careless little hand, that Mr. Dombey took in his, was singularly out of keeping with the wistful little face. But he had no part in its sorrowful expression. It was not addressed to him. No, no! To Florence, all to Florence.

"I shall see you soon, Paul," said Mr. Dombey, bending over to kiss the child. "You are free on Saturdays and Sundays, you know."

"Yes, papa," returned Paul, looking at his sister. "On Saturdays and Sundays."

"And you 'll try and learn a great deal here and be a clever man," said Mr. Dombey; "won't you?"

"I 'll try," said the boy, wearily, and then after his father had patted him on the head, and pressed his small hand again, and after he had one last long hug from Florence, he was left with the globes, the books, blind Homer and Minerva, while Doctor Blimber saw Mr. Dombey to the door.

After the lapse of some minutes, Doctor Blimber came back, and the doctor lifting his new pupil off the table deliv-

ered him over to Miss Blimber's care. Miss Blimber received his young ward from the doctor's hands; and Paul, feeling that the spectacles were surveying him, cast down his eyes.

"How much of your Latin Grammar do you know, Dombey?" said Miss Blimber.

"None of it," answered Paul. Feeling that the answer was a shock to Miss Blimber's sensibility he added:

"I have n't been well. I have been a weak child. I could n't learn a Latin Grammar when I was out every day with old Glubb. I wish you would tell old Glubb to come and see me, if you please."

"What a dreadful low name," said Mrs. Blimber. "Unclassical to a degree! Who is the monster, child?"

"What monster!" inquired Paul.

"Glubb," said Mrs. Blimber.

"He 's no more a monster than you are," returned Paul.

"What!" cried the doctor, in a terrible voice. "Aye, aye, aye? Aha! What 's that?"

Paul was dreadfully frightened, but still he made a stand for the absent Glubb, though he did it trembling.

"He 's a very nice old man, ma'am," he said. "He used to draw my couch; he knows all about the deep sea and the fish that are in it, and though old Glubb don't know why the sea should make me think of my mama that 's dead, or what it is that it is always saying, — always saying, he knows a great deal about it."

"Ha!" said the doctor, shaking his head: "this is bad, but study will do much. Take him round the house, Cornelia, and familiarise him with his new sphere. Go with that young lady, Dombey."

Dombey obeyed, giving his hand to Cornelia, who took him first to the school-room. Here were eight young gentlemen in various stages of mental prostration, all very hard at

work and very grave indeed. Toots, the oldest boy in the school, to whom Paul had previously been introduced, had a desk to himself in one corner, and a magnificent man of immense age, he looked in Paul's eyes behind it.

The appearance of a new boy did not create the sensation that might have been expected. Mr. Feeder, B. A., gave him a bony hand and told him he was glad to see him, and then Paul, instructed by Miss Blimber shook hands with all the eight young gentlemen, at work against time. Then Cornelia led Paul upstairs to the top of the house: and there, in a front room looking over the wild sea, Cornelia showed him a nice little white bed with white hangings, close to the window, on which there was already written on a card in round text DOMBEY; while two other little bedsteads in the same room, were announced through the same means as belonging to BRIGGS and TOZER.

Then Miss Blimber said to Dombey that dinner would be ready in a quarter of an hour, and perhaps he had better go into the school-room among his "friends." So Dombey opened the school-room door a very little way and strayed in like a lost boy.

His "friends," were all dispersed about the room. All the boys (Toots excepted) were getting ready for dinner — some newly tying their neckcloths, and others washing their hands or brushing their hair in an adjoining room. Young Toots, who was ready beforehand, and had therefore leisure to bestow upon Dombey, said with heavy good-nature, —

"Sit down, Dombey."

"Thank you, sir," said Paul.

His endeavouring to hoist himself on to a very high window-seat, and his slipping down again, prepared Toots' mind for the reception of a discovery.

"You 're a very small chap," said Mr. Toots.

"Yes, sir, I 'm small," returned Paul. "Thank you, sir." For Toots had lifted him into the seat, and done it kindly too.

"Who 's your tailor?" inquired Toots, after looking at him for some moments.

"It 's a woman that has made my clothes as yet," said Paul "My sister's dressmaker."

"My tailor 's Burgess and Co.," said Toots. "Fash'nable but very dear."

Paul had wit enough to shake his head, as if he would have said it was easy to see that.

"Your father 's regularly rich, ain't he?" inquired Mr. Toots.

"Yes, sir," said Paul. "He 's Dombey and Son."

"And which?" demanded Toots.

"And son, sir," replied Paul.

By this time the other pupils had gathered round, and after a few minutes of general conversation the gong sounded, which caused a general move towards the dining-room. Paul's chair at the table was next to Miss Blimber, but it being found, when he sat in it, that his eyebrows were not much above the level of the table-cloth, some books were brought, on which he was elevated, and on which he always sat from that time, carrying them in and out himself on after occasions, like a little elephant and castle.

Grace having been said by the doctor, dinner began. There was some nice soup, also roast meat, boiled meat, vegetables, pie, and cheese. Every young gentleman had a massive silver fork and a napkin, and all the arrangements were stately and handsome. There was a butler too, in a blue coat and brass buttons.

Nobody spoke unless spoken to, except Doctor Blimber, Mrs. Blimber, and Miss Blimber. Only once during dinner

was there any conversation that included the young gentlemen. It happened when the doctor, having hemmed twice or thrice, said:—

"It is remarkable, Mr. Feeder, that the Romans —"

At this mention of this terrible people, their implacable enemies, every young gentleman fastened his gaze upon the doctor, with an assumption of the deepest interest. One of the number happened to be drinking, and when he caught the doctor's eye glaring at him through the side of his tumbler, he left off so hastily that he was convulsed for some moments, and in the sequel ruined Doctor Blimber's point, for at the critical part of the Roman tale, Johnson, unable to suppress it any longer, burst into such an overwhelming fit of coughing that, although both his immediate neighbours thumped him on the back, and Mr. Feeder himself held a glass of water to his lips, and the butler walked him up and down several times between his own chair and the sideboard, like a sentry, it was full five minutes before he was moderately composed, and then there was a profound silence.

"Gentlemen," said Doctor Blimber, "rise for Grace! Cornelia, lift Dombey down. Johnson will repeat to me to-morrow morning before breakfast, without book, and from the Greek Testament, the first chapter of Saint Paul to the Ephesians. We will resume our studies, Mr. Feeder, in half-an-hour."

The young gentlemen bowed and withdrew. Through the rest of the day's routine of work Paul sat in a corner wondering whether Florence was thinking of him and what they were about at Mrs. Pipchin's.

In the confidence of their own room that night Briggs said his head ached ready to split. Tozer did n't say much, but he sighed a good deal, and told Paul to look out for his turn would come to-morrow. And Tozer was right. The next

morning Miss Blimber called Dombey to her and gave him a great pile of books.

"These are yours, Dombey," said Miss Blimber.

"All of 'em, ma'am?" said Paul.

"Yes," returned Miss Blimber; "and Mr. Feeder will look you out some more very soon if you are as studious as I expect you will be, Dombey."

"Thank you, ma'am," said Paul.

"Now, don't lose time, Dombey," continued Miss Blimber, "for you have none to spare, but take them downstairs and begin directly."

"Yes, ma'am," answered Paul.

There were so many of them that, although Paul put one hand under the bottom book and his other hand and his chin on the top book and hugged them all closely, the middle book slipped out before he reached the door, and then they all tumbled down on the floor. Miss Blimber said, "Oh, Dombey, Dombey, this is really very careless," and piled them up afresh for him; and this time by dint of balancing them with great nicety, Paul got out of the room and down a few stairs before two of them escaped again. But he held the rest so tight that he only left one more on the first floor and one in the passage; and when he had got the main body down into the school-room, he set off upstairs again to collect the stragglers. Having at last amassed the whole library and climbed into his place he fell to work, encouraged by a remark from Tozer to the effect that he was in for it now; which was the only interruption he received until breakfast time, for which meal he had no appetite, and when it was finished, he followed Miss Blimber upstairs.

"Now, Dombey, how have you got on with those books?" asked Miss Blimber.

They comprised a little English, and a deal of Latin,

names of things, declensions of articles and nouns, exercises thereon, and preliminary rules; a trifle of orthography, a glance at ancient history, a wink or two at modern ditto, a few tables, two or three weights and measures, and a little general information. When poor Paul had spelt out number two, he found he had no idea of number one, fragments whereof obtruded themselves into number three, which slided into number four, which grafted itself on to number two. So that whether twenty Romuluses made a Remus, or hic, haec, hoc, was troy weight, or a verb always agreed with an ancient Briton, or three times four was Taurus, a bull, were open questions with him.

"Oh, Dombey, Dombey!" said Miss Blimber, "this is very shocking!"

"If you please," said Paul, "I think if I might sometimes talk a little with old Glubb, I should be able to do better."

"Nonsense, Dombey," said Miss Blimber, "I could n't hear of it; and now take away the top book, if you please, Dombey, and return when you are master of the theme."

From that time Paul gave his whole mind to the pursuit of knowledge and acquitted himself very well, but it was hard work, and only on Saturdays did he have time to draw a free breath.

Oh Saturdays, happy Saturdays, when Florence, still at Mrs. Pipchin's, came at noon; they made up for all the other days!

It did not take long for the loving sister to discover that Paul needed help with the lessons over which he plodded so patiently, and so, procuring the books which he used, she kept pace with him in his studies, and every Saturday was able to assist him with his next week's work, and thus he was kept from sinking underneath the burden which Cornelia Blimber piled upon his back.

It was not that Miss Blimber meant to be too hard upon

him, or that Doctor Blimber meant to bear too heavily upon the young gentlemen in general, but comforted by the applause of the young gentlemen's nearest relatives, and urged on by their blind vanity and ill-considered haste, it would have been strange if Doctor Blimber had discovered his mistake. Thus in the case of Paul. When Doctor Blimber said he made great progress and was naturally clever, Mr. Dombey was more bent than ever on his being forced and crammed.

Such spirits as he had in the outset Paul soon lost. But he retained all that was strange and old and thoughtful in his character. The only difference was that he kept his character to himself. He grew more thoughtful and reserved every day. He loved to be alone; and in those short intervals when he was not occupied with his books, he liked nothing so well as wandering about the house by himself, or sitting on the stairs listening to the great clock in the hall.

They were within some two or three weeks of the holidays when one day Cornelia called Dombey to her to hear the analysis of his character that she was about to send to his father.

"*Analysis*," said Miss Blimber, "of the character of P. Dombey. It may be generally observed of Dombey," said Miss Blimber, reading in a loud voice, and at every second word directing her spectacles towards the little figure before her, "that his abilities and inclinations are good, and that he has made as much progress as under the circumstances could have been expected. But it is to be lamented of this young gentleman that he is singular (what is usually termed old-fashioned) in his character and conduct, and that he is often very unlike other young gentlemen of his age and social position. Now, Dombey," said Miss Blimber, laying down the paper, "do you understand? This analysis, you see, Dombey," Miss Blimber continued, "is going to be sent home to your

respected parent. It will naturally be very painful to him to find that you are singular in your character and conduct. It is naturally very painful to us, for we can't like you, you know, Dombey, as well as we could wish."

She touched the child upon a tender point. He had secretly become more solicitous from day to day that all the house should like him. He could not bear to think that they would be quite indifferent to him when he was gone, and he had even made it his business to conciliate a great, hoarse, shaggy dog, who had previously been the terror of his life, that even he might miss him.

This poor tiny Paul set forth to Miss Blimber as well as he could and begged her, in spite of the official analysis, to have the goodness to try to like him. To Mrs. Blimber, who had joined them, he preferred the same petition; and when she gave her oft-repeated opinion that he was an odd child, Paul told her that he was sure that she was quite right; that he thought it must be his bones, but he didn't know, and he hoped she would overlook it, for he was fond of them all.

"Not so fond," said Paul, with a mixture of frankness and timidity which was one of the most peculiar and engaging qualities of his, "not so fond as I am of Florence, of course; that could never be. You couldn't expect that, could you, ma'am?"

"Oh, the old-fashioned little soul!" cried Mrs. Blimber, in a whisper.

"But I like everybody here very much," pursued Paul, "and I should grieve to go away and think that any one was glad I had gone, or didn't care."

Mrs. Blimber was now sure that Paul was the oddest child in the world, and when she told the doctor what had passed, he did not controvert his wife's opinion.

And Paul's wish was gratified. His purpose was to be a gentle, helpful, quiet little fellow, and though he was often to be seen at his old post on the stairs, or watching the waves or the clouds from his solitary window, he was oftener found too, among the other boys, modestly rendering them some little voluntary service. Thus it came to pass that Paul was an object of general interest: a fragile little plaything that they all liked, and that no one would have thought of treating roughly. But he could not change his nature, and so they all agreed that Dombey was old-fashioned.

There were some immunities, however, attaching to the character enjoyed by no one else. They could have better spared a newer-fashioned child, and that alone was much. When the others only bowed to Doctor Blimber and family when retiring, Paul would stretch his morsel of a hand, and boldly shake the doctor's, also Mrs. Blimber's, also Cornelia's; and if any one was to be begged off from impending punishment, Paul was always the delegate.

One evening, when the holidays were very near, Paul was in Toots' room watching Mr. Feeder and Toots fold, seal, and direct, the invitations for the evening party with which the term was to close. Paul's head, which had long been ailing more or less, and was sometimes very heavy and painful, felt so uneasy that night that he was obliged to support it on his hand. And it dropped so that by little and little it sunk on Mr. Toots' knee, and rested there.

That was no reason why he should be deaf; but he must have been, he thought, for by and by he heard Mr. Feeder calling in his ear, and gently shaking him to rouse his attention. And when he raised his head, quite scared, he found that Doctor Blimber had come into the room, and that the window was open, and that his forehead was wet with sprinkled water.

"Ah! Come, come, that's well. How is my little friend now?" said Doctor Blimber.

"Oh, quite well, thank you, sir," said Paul.

But there seemed to be something the matter with the floor, for he could n't stand upon it steadily; and with the walls too, for they were inclined to turn round and round.

It was very kind of Mr. Toots to carry him to the top of the house so tenderly, and Paul told him that it was. But Mr. Toots said he would do a great deal more than that if he could; and, indeed, he did more as it was, for he helped Paul to undress and helped him to bed in the kindest manner possible, and then sat down by the bedside and chuckled very much, while Mr. Feeder leaning over the bottom of the bedstead set all the little bristles on his head, bolt upright with his bony hands, and then made believe to spar at Paul, with great science, on account of his being all right again, which was so funny and kind, too, in Mr. Feeder, that Paul, not being able to make up his mind whether to laugh or cry, did both at once.

Everything that could minister to Paul's comfort was done for him, and in those days just before the holidays when the other young gentlemen were labouring for dear life, Paul was such a privileged pupil as had never been seen in that house before. He could hardly believe it himself, but his liberty lasted from hour to hour, from day to day; and little Dombey was caressed by every one.

At last, the great night of the reception arrived.

When Paul was dressed, which was very soon done, for he felt unwell and drowsy and not able to stand about it very long, he went down into the drawing-room. Shortly afterwards Mrs. Blimber appeared, looking lovely, Paul thought, and Miss Blimber came down soon after her mama. Mr. Toots and Mr. Feeder were the next arrivals. Each of

these gentlemen brought his hat in his hand as if he lived somewhere else; and when they were announced by the butler, Doctor Blimber said, "Aye, aye, aye! God bless my soul!" and seemed extremely glad to see them. Mr. Toots was one blaze of jewellery and buttons, and all the other young gentlemen were tightly cravatted, curled, and pumped, and all came in with their hats in their hands at separate times and were announced and introduced. Soon Paul slipped down from the cushioned corner of a sofa, and went downstairs into the tea-room to be ready for Florence. Presently she came; looking so beautiful in her simple ball-dress, with her fresh flowers in her hand, that when she knelt down, to take Paul round the neck and kiss him, he could hardly make up his mind to let her go again, or to take away her bright and loving eyes from his face.

"But what is the matter, Floy?" asked Paul, almost sure that he saw a tear there.

"Nothing, darling, nothing," returned Florence.

Paul touched her cheek gently with his finger, and it *was* a tear.

"We 'll go home together, and I 'll nurse you, love," said Florence.

"Nurse me?" echoed Paul.

"Floy," said Paul, holding a ringlet of her dark hair in his hand. "Tell me, dear. Do you think I have grown old-fashioned?"

His sister laughed, and fondled him and told him, "No."

Through the evening Paul sat in his corner watching the dancing and beaming with pride as he heard praise showered on Dombey's sister. They all loved her — how could they help it, Paul had known beforehand that they must and would, and few would have thought with what triumph and delight he watched her. Thus little Paul sat musing, listening, looking on and dreaming; and was very happy. Until the time

came for taking leave, and then indeed there was a sensation in the party. Every one took the heartiest sort of leave of him.

"Good-bye, Doctor Blimber," said Paul, stretching out his hand.

"Good-bye, my little friend," returned the doctor.

"I'm very much obliged to you, sir," said Paul, looking innocently up into his awful face. "Ask them to take care of Diogenes, if you please."

Diogenes was the dog who had never received a friend into his confidence, before Paul. The doctor promised that every attention should be paid to Diogenes in Paul's absence, and Paul having again thanked him, and shaken hands with him, bade adieu to Mrs. Blimber and Cornelia. Cornelia, taking both Paul's hands in hers said, — "Dombey, Dombey, you have always been my favourite pupil. God bless you!" And it showed, Paul thought, how easily one might do injustice to a person; for Miss Blimber meant it — although she was a Forcer.

A buzz then went round among the young gentlemen, of "Dombey 's going! little Dombey 's going!" and there was a general move after Paul and Florence down the staircase and into the hall, in which the whole Blimber family were included. The servants with the butler at their head had all an interest in seeing Little Dombey go, and even the young man taking out his books and trunks to the coach melted visibly. Nothing could restrain them from taking quite a noisy leave of Paul; waving hats after him, pressing downstairs to shake hands with him, crying individually "Dombey! don't forget me!" Paul whispered to Florence, as she wrapped him up before the door was opened. Did she hear them? Would she ever forget it? Was she glad to know it? And a lively delight was in his eyes as he spoke to her.

Once for a last look he turned and gazed upon the faces thus addressed to him, surprised to see how shining and how bright and how numerous they were. They swam before him, as he looked, and next moment he was in the dark coach outside holding close to Florence. From that time, whenever he thought of Doctor Blimber's it came back as he had seen it in this last view; and it never seemed a real place again, but always a dream, full of eyes.

And so ended little Paul's school days at Doctor Blimber's, for once at home again he never rose from his little bed. He lay there (listening to the noises in the street), quite tranquilly, not caring much how the time went, but watching it and everything about him with observing eyes. When the sunbeams struck into his room through the rustling blinds, and quivered on the opposite wall like golden water, he knew that evening was coming on, and that the sky was red and beautiful. As the reflection died away, and a gloom went creeping up the wall, he watched it deepen — deepen, into night. Then he thought how the long streets were dotted with lamps, and how the peaceful stars were shining overhead. His fancy had a strange tendency to wander to the river, which he knew was flowing through the great city; and now he thought how black it was and how deep it would look reflecting the hosts of stars — and more than all, how steadily it rolled away to meet the sea.

As it grew later in the night, and footsteps in the street became so rare that he could hear their coming, count them as they passed, and lose them in the hollow distance, he would lie and watch the many-coloured ring about the candle, and wait patiently for day. When day began to dawn again, he watched for the sun and when its cheerful light began to sparkle in the room, he pictured to himself — pictured! he saw — the high church towers rising up into the morning sky, the town

reviving, waking, starting into life once more, the river glistening as it rolled (but rolling fast as ever), and the country bright with dew. Familiar sounds came by degrees into the street below; the servants in the house were roused and busy; faces looked in at the door, and voices asked his attendants softly how he was. Paul always answered for himself, "I am better. I am a great deal better, thank you. Tell papa so."

By little and little he got tired of the bustle of the day, the noise of carriages and carts, and people passing and re-passing; and would fall asleep, or be troubled with a restless, and uneasy sense again — the child could hardly tell whether this were in his sleeping or his waking moments — of that rushing river.

"Why will it never stop, Floy?" he would sometimes ask her. "It is bearing me away I think."

But Floy could always soothe and reassure him: and it was his daily delight to make her lay her head down on his pillow, and take some rest.

"You are always watching me, Floy, let me watch you now." They would prop him up with cushions in a corner of his bed, and there he would recline the while she lay beside him, bending forwards oftentimes to kiss her.

Thus the flush of the day in its heat and light, would gradually decline; and again the golden water would be dancing on the wall.

He was visited by as many as three grave doctors — they used to assemble downstairs and come up together — and the room was so quiet and Paul was so observant of them (though he never asked of anybody what they said) that he even knew the difference in the sound of their watches.

The people round him changed as unaccountably as on that first night at Doctor Blimber's — except Florence; Florence never changed. Old Mrs. Pipchin dozing in an easy chair, often changed to someone else and Paul was quite content to

shut his eyes again and see what happened next, without emotion. But one figure with its head upon its hand returned so often and remained so long, and sat so still and solemn, never speaking, never being spoken to, and rarely lifting up its face, that Paul began to wonder languidly if it were real.

"Floy," he said, "what is that?"

"Where, dearest?"

"There, at the bottom of the bed."

"There's nothing there except papa."

The figure lifted up its head, and rose, and coming to the bedside said: "My own boy! Don't you know me?"

Paul looked it in the face and thought, was this his father? But the face so altered to his thinking, thrilled while he gazed, as if it were in pain; and before he could reach out both his hands to take it between them and draw it towards him, the figure turned away quickly from the little bed, and went out at the door. The next time he observed the figure sitting at the bottom of the bed, he called to it:

"Don't be so sorry for me, dear papa. Indeed, I am quite happy."

His father coming and bending down to him, which he did quickly, Paul held him round the neck and repeated those words to him several times and very earnestly. This was the beginning of his always saying in the morning that he was a great deal better, and that they were to tell his father so.

How many times the golden water danced on the wall; how many nights the dark, dark river rolled away towards the sea in spite of him, Paul never counted, never sought to know. If their kindness could have increased, or his sense of it, they were more kind, and he more grateful every day; but whether they were many days or few appeared of little moment now to the gentle boy.

One night he had been thinking of his mother and her pic-

ture in the drawing-room downstairs. The train of thought suggested to him to inquire if he had ever seen his mother; for he could not remember whether they had told him yes or no, the river running very fast and confusing his mind.

"Floy, did I ever see mama?"

"No, darling; why?"

"Did I ever see any kind face like mama's looking at me when I was a baby, Floy?"

"Oh yes, dear."

"Whose, Floy?"

"Your old nurse's, often."

"And where is my old nurse?" said Paul. "Is she dead, too? Floy are we all dead except you?"

There was a hurry in the room for an instant — longer perhaps — then all was still again, and Florence, with her face quite colourless but smiling, held his head upon her arm. Her arm trembled very much.

"Show me that old nurse, Floy, if you please."

"She is not here, darling; she shall come to-morrow."

"Thank you, Floy."

Paul closed his eyes with these words and fell asleep. When he awoke the sun was high and the broad day was clear and warm. He lay a little, looking at the windows, which were open, and the curtains rustling in the air, and waving to and fro, then he said, "Floy, is it to-morrow? Is she come?" The next thing that happened was a noise of footsteps on the stairs, and then Paul woke — woke mind and body — and sat upright in his bed. He saw them now about him. There was no gray mist before them as there had been some time in the night. He knew them every one and called them by their names.

"And who is this? Is this my old nurse?" said the child, regarding with a radiant smile a figure coming in.

Yes, yes. No other stranger would have shed those tears at sight of him, and called him her dear boy, her pretty boy, her own poor blighted child. No other woman would have stooped down by his bed, and taken up his wasted hand, and put it to her lips and breast, as one who had some right to fondle it.

"Floy, this is a kind, good face," said Paul. "I am glad to see it again. Don't go away, old nurse. Stay here."

"Good-bye, my child," cried Mrs. Pipchin, hurrying to his bed's head. "Not good-bye?"

For an instant Paul looked at her with the wistful face with which he had so often gazed upon her in his corner by the fire.

"Ah, yes," he said, placidly, "good-bye. Where is papa?"

He felt his father's breath upon his cheek before the words had parted from his lips.

"Now lay me down," he said, "and, Floy, come close to me, and let me see you."

Sister and brother wound their arms around each other, and the golden light came streaming in, and fell upon them, locked together.

"How fast the river runs, between its green banks and the rushes, Floy. But it's very near the sea. I hear the waves."

Presently he told her that the motion of the boat upon the stream was lulling him to rest. How near the banks were now. How bright the flowers growing on them, and how tall the rushes. Now the boat was out at sea but gliding smoothly on. And now there was a shore before him. Who stood on the bank?

He put his hands together as he had been used to do at his prayers. He did not remove his arms to do it, but they saw him fold them so, behind her neck.

"Mama is like you, Floy. I know her by the face. But

tell them that the print upon the stairs at school is not divine enough. The light about the head is shining on me as I go."

The golden ripple on the wall came back again, and nothing else stirred in the room. The old, old fashion. The fashion that came in with our first garments, and will last unchanged until our race has run its course, and the wide firmament is rolled up like a scroll. The old, old fashion — Death.

Oh, thank God for that older fashion yet, — of Immortality!

PIP

Pip and Miss Havisham.

PIP

MY father's family name being Pirrip, and my Christian name Philip, my infant tongue could make of both names nothing more explicit than Pip. So I called myself Pip, and came to be called Pip.

My mother and father both being dead, I was brought up by my sister, Mrs. Joe Gargery, who was more than twenty years older than I, and a veritable shrew by nature. She had acquired a great reputation among the neighbours because she had brought me up by hand. Not understanding this expression, and knowing her to have a hard and heavy hand, and to be much in the habit of laying it upon her husband as well as upon me, I supposed that Joe Gargery and I were both brought up by hand.

Joe, her husband, was a mild, good-natured, sweet-tempered, easy-going, foolish, dear fellow, with light curly hair and blue eyes, and he and I were great chums, as well as fellow-sufferers under the rule of my sharp-tongued sister.

One afternoon I was wandering in the church-yard where my mother and father were buried, when I was accosted by a fearful man all in coarse grey, with a great iron on his leg. He wore no hat and had broken shoes, and an old rag tied round his head. He limped and shivered, and glared and growled, his teeth chattering, as he seized me by the chin.

"O don't cut my throat, sir!" I pleaded in terror. "Pray don't do it, sir!"

"Tell us your name," said the man, "quick!"

"Pip, sir."

"Show us where you live," he said. "Point out the place!"

I pointed to where our village lay, and then the man, after looking at me for a moment, turned me upside down and emptied my pockets, but there was nothing in them except a piece of bread. When the church came to itself, for he was so sudden and strong that he made it go head over heels before me, — I was seated on a high tombstone trembling, while he ate the bread ravenously. Then he came nearer to my tombstone, took me by both arms, and tilted me back as far as he could hold me, looking into my eyes.

"Now lookee here," he said, "you get me a file and you get me wittles; you bring both to me to-morrow morning early, that file and them wittles. You bring the lot to me at that old Battery yonder. You do it, and you never dare to say a word concerning your having seen such a person as me, and you shall be let live. You fail in any partickler and your heart and your liver shall be tore out, roasted and ate! Now I ain't alone, as you may think. There is a young man hid with me who hears the words I speak. It is in wain for a boy to attempt to hide himself from that young man. A boy may lock his door, may be warm in bed, may draw the clothes over his head, may think himself comfortable and safe, but that young man will soon creep and creep his way to him and tear him open. I am a-keeping the young man from harming of you at the present moment with great difficulty. Now what do you say?"

I said I would get him the file and what food I could, and would come to him early in the morning.

"Say, Lord strike me dead, if you don't!"

I said so and he took me down. I faltered a good night,

and he turned to go, walking as if he were numb and stiff. When I saw him turn to look once more at me, I made the best use of my legs, having a terrible fear of him, and of the young man, and I ran home without once stopping.

I found the forge shut up and Joe alone in the kitchen. The minute I raised the latch, he said:

"Mrs. Joe has been out a dozen times looking for you, Pip, and she's out now, and what's more, she's got Tickler with her."

At this dismal intelligence I looked with great depression at the fire. Tickler was a wax-ended piece of cane, worn smooth by contact with my tickled frame.

"She sot down," said Joe, "and she got up, and she made a grab at Tickler, and she rampaged out. Now she's a-coming! Go behind the door, old chap!"

I took the advice, but my sister, throwing the door wide open, and finding an obstruction behind it, guessed the cause, and applied Tickler to its further investigation.

"Where have you been, you young monkey?" she asked, stamping her foot; "Tell me directly what you've been doing to wear me away with fret and fright and worrit?"

"I have only been in the church-yard," said I, crying and rubbing myself, but my answer did not satisfy my sister, who kept on scolding and applying Tickler to my person until she was obliged to see to the tea things. Though I was very hungry, I dared not eat my bread and butter, for I felt that I must have something in reserve to take my dreadful acquaintance in case I could find nothing else. Therefore, at a moment when no one was looking, I put a hunk of bread and butter down the leg of my trousers. Joe thought I had eaten it in one gulp, which greatly distressed him, and I was borne off and dosed with tar water.

Conscience is a dreadful thing when it accuses man or boy.

The guilty knowledge that I was going to rob Mrs. Joe, united to the necessity of keeping one hand on my bread and butter as I sat or moved about, almost drove me out of my mind, but as it was Christmas Eve, I was obliged to stir the pudding for next day for one whole hour. I tried to do it with the load on my leg, and found the tendency of exercise was to bring the bread out at my ankle, so I managed to slip away and deposit it in my garret room. Later there was a sound of firing in the distance. "Ah," said Joe, "there's another convict off!"

"What does that mean, Joe," said I.

Mrs. Joe answered, "Escaped, escaped," and Joe added, —"There was one off last night, and they fired warning of him. And now it appears they're firing warning of another."

"Who's firing?" said I.

"Drat that boy," said my sister, frowning. "What a questioner he is! Ask no questions and you'll be told no lies!"

I waited a while, and then as a last resort, I said, —"Mrs. Joe, I should like to know — if you would n't much mind — where the firing comes from?"

"Lord bless the boy!" she exclaimed, "from the Hulks!"

"Oh — h," said I, looking at Joe, "Hulks! And please what's Hulks?"

"That's the way with this boy," exclaimed my sister, "answer him one question, and he'll ask you a dozen directly. Hulks are prison ships right 'cross the meshes." (We always used that name for marshes in our country.)

"I wonder who's put in prison ships, and why they're put there," said I.

This was too much for Mrs. Joe, who immediately rose. "I tell ye what, young fellow," said she, "I did n't bring you up by hand to badger people's lives out. People are put in

the Hulks because they murder and rob and forge and do all sorts of bad; and they always begin by asking questions. Now you get along to bed!"

I was never allowed a candle and as I crept up in the dark I felt fearfully sensible that the Hulks were handy for me. I was clearly on the way there. I had begun by asking questions and I was going to rob Mrs. Joe. I was also in mortal terror of the young man who wanted my heart and liver, and of my acquaintance with the iron on his leg, and if I slept at all that night it was only to imagine myself drifting down the river on a strong spring tide to the Hulks, a ghostly pirate calling out to me through a speaking trumpet that I had better come ashore and be hanged there at once. I was afraid to sleep even if I could have, for I knew that at the first dawn of morning I must rob the pantry and be off.

So as early as possible I crept downstairs to the pantry and secured some bread, some rind of cheese, half a jar of mincemeat, some brandy from a stone bottle which I poured into a bottle of my own and then filled the stone one up with water. I also took a meat bone and a beautiful pork pie. Then I got a file from among Joe's tools, and with this and my other plunder made my way with all dispatch along the river-side. Presently I came upon what I supposed was the man I was searching for, for he too was dressed in coarse gray and had a great iron on his leg, but his face was different.

"It's the young man," I thought, feeling my heart beat fast at the idea. He swore at me as I passed, and tried in a weak way to hit me, but then he ran away and I continued my trip to the Battery, and there was the right man in a ravenous condition. He was gobbling mincemeat, meat-bone, bread, cheese, and pork pie all at once, when he turned suddenly and said:

"You 're not a deceiving imp? You brought no one with you?" I answered no, and he resumed his meal, snapping at the food as a dog would do. While he was eating, I ventured to remark that I had met the young man he spoke of, at which the man showed the greatest surprise, and became so violently excited that I was very much afraid of him. I was also afraid of remaining away from home any longer. I told him I must go, but he took no notice, so I thought the best thing I could do was to slip off, which I did.

"And where the deuce ha' you been?" was Mrs. Joe's Christmas salutation.

I said I had been down to hear the carols. "Ah well," observed Mrs. Joe, "you might ha' done worse," and then went on with her work as we were to have company for dinner, and the feast was to be one that occasioned extensive arrangements. My sister had too much to do to go to church, but Joe and I went, arrayed in our Sunday best. When we reached home we found the table laid, Mrs. Joe dressed and the front door unlocked — (it never was at any other time) and everything most splendid. And still not a word about the robbery. The company arrived; Mr. Wopsle, Mr. and Mrs. Hubble, and Uncle Pumblechook, Joe's uncle, who lived in the nearest town and drove his own chaise cart.

Dinner was a brilliant success, but so rich that Uncle Pumblechook was entirely overcome, and was obliged to call for brandy. Oh heavens! he would say it was weak, and I should be lost! I held tight to the leg of the table and awaited my fate. The brandy was poured out and Uncle Pumblechook drank it off. Instantly he sprang to his feet, turned round several times in an appalling, spasmodic whooping-cough dance, and rushed out at the door to the great consternation of the company. Mrs. Joe and Joe ran out and brought him back, and as he sank into his chair he gasped the

one word, "Tar!" I had filled up the bottle from the tar-water jug! Oh misery! I knew he would be worse by and by!

"Tar?" cried my sister. "Why how ever could tar come there?" Fortunately at that moment, Uncle Pumblechook called for hot gin and water, and my sister had to employ herself actively in getting it. For the time at least, I was saved. By degrees I became calmer and able to partake of pudding, and was beginning to think I should get over the day, when my sister said, "You must finish with such a delicious present of Uncle Pumblechook's, a savoury pork pie!" She went out to the pantry to get it. I am not certain whether I uttered a shrill yell of terror merely in spirit or in the hearing of the company. I felt that I must run away, so I released the leg of the table and ran for my life. But at the door, I ran head foremost into a party of soldiers ringing down the butt-ends of their muskets on our doorstep. This apparition caused the dinner party to rise hastily, while Mrs. Joe who was re-entering the kitchen, empty-handed, stopped short in her lament of "Gracious goodness, gracious me, what 's gone — with the — pie!" and stared at the visitors.

Further acquaintance with the military gentlemen proved that they had not come for me, as I fully expected, but merely to have a pair of hand-cuffs mended, which Joe at once proceeded to do, and while the soldiers waited they stood about the kitchen, and piled their arms in the corner, telling us that they were on the search for the two convicts who had escaped from the prison ships. When Joe's job was done, he proposed that some of us go with them to see the hunt. Only Mr. Wopsle cared to go, and then Joe said he would take me. To this Mrs. Joe merely remarked: "If you bring the boy back, with his head blown to bits with a musket, don't look to me to put it together again!"

The soldiers took a polite leave of the ladies and then we started off, Joe whispering to me, "I'd give a shilling if they'd cut and run, Pip!"

There was no doubt in my mind that the man I had succoured and the other one I had seen, were the convicts in question, and as we went on and on, my heart thumped violently. The man had asked me if I was a deceiving imp. Would he believe now that I had betrayed him?

On we went, and on and on, down banks and up banks, and over gates, hearing the sound of shouting in the distance. As we came nearer to the sound, the soldiers ran like deer. Water was splashing, mud was flying, and oaths were being sworn, and then, "Here are both men!" panted the sergeant, struggling in a ditch. "Surrender, you two! Come asunder!" Other soldiers ran to help, and dragged up from the ditch my convict and the other one. Both were bleeding and panting and struggling, but of course I knew them both directly. While the manacles were being put on their hands, my convict saw me for the first time. I looked at him eagerly, and slightly moved my hands and shook my head, trying to assure him of my innocence, but he did not in any way show me that he understood my gestures. We soon set off, the convicts kept apart, and each surrounded by a separate guard. Mr. Wopsle would have liked to turn back, but Joe was resolved to see it out, so we went on with the party, carrying torches which flared up and lighted our way. We could not go fast because of the lameness of the prisoners, and they were so spent that we had to halt two or three times while they rested. After an hour or two of this travelling, we came to a hut where there was a guard. Here the sergeant made some sort of a report, and an entry in a book, and then the other convict was drafted to go on board the Hulks first. My convict only looked at me once. While we stood in the hut, he

looked thoughtfully into the fire. Suddenly he turned to the sergeant and remarked that he wished to say something about his escape, adding that it might prevent some persons being laid under suspicions.

"You can say what you like," returned the sergeant, and the convict continued:

"A man can't starve, at least I can't. I took some wittles up at the village yonder — where the church stands a'most out on the marshes, and I 'll tell you where from. From the blacksmith's."

"Halloa, Pip!" said Joe, staring at me.

"It was some broken wittles —and a dram of liquor — and a pie."

"Have you happened to miss such an article as a pie, blacksmith?" asked the sergeant.

"My wife did, at the very moment when you came in. Don't you know, Pip?"

"So," said my convict, looking at Joe, "so you 're the blacksmith, are you? Then I 'm sorry to say, I 've eat your pie."

"God knows you 're welcome to it, so far as it was ever mine," returned Joe. "We don't know what you 've done, but we would n't have you starve to death for it, poor miserable fellow-creature, would we, Pip?"

Something that I had noticed before, clicked in the man's throat, and he turned his back. The boat was ready for him, and we saw him rowed off by a crew of convicts like himself.

We saw the boat go alongside of the Hulks, and we saw the prisoner taken up the side and disappear, and then the excitement was all over. I was so tired and sleepy by that time that Joe took me on his back and carried me home, and when we arrived there I was fast asleep. When at last I was roused by the heat and noise and lights, Joe was relating the story of our expedition and of the convict's confession of his theft from

our pantry. This was all I heard that night, for my sister clutched me, as a slumbrous offence to the company's eyesight, and assisted me very forcefully up to bed, and after that the subject of the convict and the robbery was only mentioned on a few occasions when something brought it to mind. In regard to my part of it, I do not recall any tenderness of conscience in reference to Mrs. Joe, when the fear of being found out was lifted off me. But I dearly loved Joe, and it was on my mind that I ought to tell him the whole truth. And yet I did not, fearing that I might lose his love and confidence, and that he would think me worse than I really was. And so he never heard the truth of the matter. At this time I was only odd-boy about the forge, or errand boy for any neighbour who wanted a job done, and in the evenings I went to a school kept by Mr. Wopsle's great-aunt, who used to go to sleep from six to seven every evening, in the society of youth who paid twopence per week each for the improving opportunity of seeing her do it. With her assistance, and the help of her granddaughter, Biddy, I struggled through the alphabet, as if it had been a bramble bush, getting considerably worried and scratched by each letter. After that, the nine figures began to add to my misery, but at last I began to read, write, and cipher on the smallest scale.

One night, about a year after our hunt for the convicts, Joe and I sat together in the chimney corner while I struggled with a letter which I was writing on my slate to Joe, for practice. As we sat there, Joe made the fire and swept the hearth, for we were momentarily expecting Mrs. Joe. It was market day, and she had gone to market with Uncle Pumblechook to assist him in buying such household stuffs and goods as required a woman's judgment. Just as we had completed our preparations, she and Uncle Pumblechook drove up, and came in wrapped up to the eyes, for it was a bitter night.

"Now," said Mrs. Joe, unwrapping herself in haste and excitement, "if this boy ain't grateful to-night, he never will be!"

I looked as grateful as any boy could who had no idea what he was to be grateful about, and after many side remarks addressed to the others, Mrs. Joe informed me that Miss Havisham wished me to go and play at her house for her amusement. "And of course, he's going," added my sister severely, "And he had better play there, or I'll work him!"

I had heard of Miss Havisham, everybody for miles round had heard of her, as an immensely rich and grim old lady, who lived a life of seclusion in a large and dismal house, barricaded against robbers.

"Well, to be sure," said Joe, astounded, "I wonder how she comes to know Pip!"

"Noodle," said my sister, "who said she knew him? Could n't she ask Uncle Pumblechook if he knew of a boy to go and play there? And could n't Uncle Pumblechook, being always thoughtful for us, then mention this boy, that I have forever been a willing slave to?" After this she added, "For anything we can tell, the boy's fortune is made by this. Uncle Pumblechook has offered to take him into town to-night and keep him over night, and to take him with his own hands to Miss Havisham's to-morrow morning, and Lor-a-mussy me!" cried my sister. "Here I stand talking, with Uncle Pumblechook waiting, and the mare catching cold at the door, and the boy grimed with dirt from the hair of his head to the sole of his foot!" With that she pounced on me and I was scraped and kneaded, and towelled and thumped, and harrowed and reaped, until I was really quite beside myself. When at last my ablutions were completed, I was put into clean linen of the stiffest

character, and in my tightest and fearfullest suit, I was then delivered over to Mr. Pumblechook, who said dramatically: "Boy, be forever grateful to all friends, but especially unto them which brought you up by hand!"

"Good-bye, Joe."

"God bless you, Pip, old chap!"

I had never parted from him before, and what with my feelings, and what with soap-suds, I could at first see no stars from the chaise cart. But they twinkled out one by one without throwing any light on the question why on earth I was going to play at Miss Havisham's, and what on earth I was expected to play at.

I spent the night with Uncle Pumblechook, and the next morning we started off for Miss Havisham's, and within a quarter hour had reached the house, which looked dismal, and had a great many iron bars to it. Some of the windows had been walled up, and the others were rustily barred. There was a court-yard in front which was also barred, so after ringing the bell we had to wait until some one should open it. Presently a window was raised and a voice asked "What name?" to which my conductor replied, "Pumblechook." Then the window was shut, and a very pretty, proud-appearing young lady came down with keys in her hand. She opened the gate to let me in, and Uncle Pumblechook was about to follow, when the young lady remarked that Miss Havisham did not wish to see him. She said it in such an undiscussible way that Uncle Pumblechook dared not protest, and so I followed my young guide in alone and crossed the court-yard. We entered the house by a side door — the great front entrance had chains across it — and we went through many passages, and up a staircase, in the dark except for a single candle. At last we came to the door of a room, and she said, "Go in."

I answered, more in shyness than politeness, "After you,

miss." But she answered, "Don't be ridiculous, boy; I am not going in," and scornfully walked away, and what was worse, took the candle with her.

This was most uncomfortable, and I was half afraid. However, there was only one thing to be done, so I knocked at the door, and was told from within to enter. I entered and found myself in a pretty, large room, well lighted with wax candles. No glimpse of daylight was to be seen in it. It was a dressing-room, as I supposed from the furniture, though much of it was of forms and uses quite unknown to me then. But prominent in it was a draped table with a gilded looking-glass, and that I made out to be a fine lady's dressing-table.

In an arm chair sat the strangest lady I have ever seen or shall ever see. She was dressed in rich white — in satin and lace and silks — all of white. Even her shoes were white, and she had a long white veil dependent from her hair, and bridal flowers in her hair, — and the hair, too, was white. Some bright jewels sparkled on her neck and hands and others lay sparkling on the table. Dresses, less splendid than the one she wore, and half-packed trunks, were scattered about. She had but one shoe on and the other was on the table near by — her veil was but half arranged; her watch and chain were not put on; and there were lace, trinkets, handkerchief, gloves, some flowers, and a Prayer-book in a heap before the looking-glass. Then she spoke, "Who is it?"

"Pip, ma'am."

"Pip?"

"Mr. Pumblechook's boy, ma'am. Come — to play."

"Come nearer; let me look at you. Come close."

When I stood before her, avoiding her eyes, I took in all the details of the room and saw that her watch and clock had both stopped.

"Look at me," said Miss Havisham. "You are not

afraid of a woman who has not seen the sun since you were born?"

I regret to say that I was not afraid of telling the enormous lie comprehended in the answer, "No."

"Do you know what I touch here?" she said, laying her hands on her left side.

"Yes, ma'am."

"What do I touch?"

"Your heart."

"Broken."

She said the word eagerly, and with a weird smile that had a kind of boast in it.

"I am tired," said Miss Havisham. "I have a sick fancy that I want to see some play. I want diversion, and I have done with men and women. There, there," with an impatient movement of the fingers of her right hand, "play, play, play!"

For a moment, with the fear of my sister "working me" before my eyes, I had a desperate idea of starting round the room in the assumed character of Mr. Pumblechook's chaise cart. But I felt so unequal to the performance that I gave it up, and stood looking at Miss Havisham in what I suppose she took for a dogged manner, and presently she said:

"Are you sullen and obstinate?"

"No, ma'am," I said. "I am very sorry for you and very sorry I can't play just now. If you complain of me, I shall get into trouble with my sister, so I would do it, if I could, but it's new here, and so strange and so fine, and — melancholy." I stopped, fearing I might have said too much, and we took another look at each other. Before she spoke again, she looked at herself in the glass, then she turned, and flashing a look at me, said, "Call Estella. You can do that. Call Estella. At the door."

To stand in the dark in the mysterious passage of an unknown house, bawling "Estella" to a scornful young lady neither visible nor responsive, and feeling it a dreadful liberty to roar out her name, was almost as bad as playing to order. But she answered at last, and her light came trembling along the dark passage, like a star. Miss Havisham beckoned her to come close to her, took up a jewel, and tried its effect against the pretty brown hair. "Your own, one day, my dear," she said, "and you will use it well. Let me see you play cards with this boy."

"With this boy! Why, he is a common labouring boy!" then she asked, with greatest disdain, "What do you play, boy?"

"Nothing but 'beggar my neighbour,' miss."

"Beggar him," said Miss Havisham to Estella. So we sat down to cards, and Miss Havisham sat, corpse-like, watching as we played.

"He calls the knaves Jacks, this boy," said Estella, with disdain, before the first game was out. "And what coarse hands he has, and what thick boots!"

I had never thought of being ashamed of my hands before, but now I began to notice them. Her contempt for me was so strong that I caught it.

She won the game, and I dealt. I misdealt, as was only natural, when I knew she was lying in wait for me to do wrong, and she denounced me for a clumsy, stupid, labouring boy.

"You say nothing of her," remarked Miss Havisham to me. "She says many hard things of you, yet you say nothing of her. What do you think of her?"

"I don't like to say," I stammered.

"Tell me in my ear," said Miss Havisham, bending down.

"I think she is very proud," I replied in a whisper — "and very pretty — and very insulting."

"Anything else?"

"I think I should like to go home."

"You shall go soon," said Miss Havisham aloud. "Play the game out!" I played the game to an end, and Estella beggared me.

"When shall I have you here again?" said Miss Havisham. "I know nothing of the days of the week or of the weeks of the year. Come again after six days. You hear?"

"Yes, ma'am."

"Estella, take him down. Let him have something to eat, and let him roam about and look about him while he eats. Go, Pip."

I followed Estella down as I had followed her up, and at last I stood again in the glare of daylight which quite confounded me, for I felt as if I had been in the candle-light of the strange room many hours.

"You are to wait here, you boy, you," said Estella, and disappeared in the house. While she was gone I looked at my coarse hands and my common boots, and they troubled me greatly.

I determined to ask Joe why he had taught me to call the picture-cards Jacks. I wished Joe had been rather more genteelly brought up, and then I should have been so too. Estella came back with some bread and meat and a little mug of beer which she set down as insolently as if I were a dog in disgrace. I was so humiliated and hurt that tears sprang to my eyes. When she saw them she looked at me with a quick delight. This gave me the power to keep them back and to look at her; then she gave a contemptuous toss of her head, and left me to my meal. At first, so bitter were my feelings that, after she was gone, I hid behind one of the gates to the brewery and cried. As I cried I kicked the wall and took a hard twist at my hair. However, I came out from behind the gate,

the bread and meat were acceptable and the beer was warm and tingling, and I was soon in spirits to look about me. I had surveyed the rank old garden when Estella came back with the keys to let me out. She gave me a triumphant look as she opened the gate. I was passing out without looking at her, when she touched me with a taunting cry, —

"Why don't you cry?"

"Because I don't want to."

"You do," she said; "you have been crying and you are near crying now!" As she spoke she laughed, pushed me out, and locked the gate upon me, and I set off on the four-mile walk home, pondering as I went along, on what I had seen and heard.

Of course, when I reached home they were very curious to know all about Miss Havisham's, and asked many questions that I was not in a mood to answer. The worst of it was that Uncle Pumblechook, devoured by curiosity, came gaping over too at tea-time to have the details divulged to him. I was not in a good humour anyway that night, so the sight of my tormentors made me vicious in my reticence.

After asking a number of questions with no satisfaction, Uncle Pumblechook began again.

"Now, boy," he said, "what was Miss Havisham a-doing of when you went in to-day?"

"She was sitting," I answered, "in a black velvet coach."

My hearers stared at one another — as they well might — and repeated, "In a black velvet coach?"

"Yes," said I, "and Miss Estella, that's her niece, I think, handed her in cake and wine at the coach window on a gold plate. And we all had cake and wine on gold plates. And I got up behind the coach to eat mine because she told me to."

"Was anybody else there?" asked Mr. Pumblechook.

"Four dogs," said I.

"Large or small?"

"Immense," said I. "And they fought for veal cutlets out of a silver basket."

My hearers stared at one another again in utter amazement. I was perfectly frantic and would have told them anything.

"Where was this coach, in the name of gracious?" asked my sister.

"In Miss Havisham's room." They stared again. "But there were n't any horses to it." I added this saving clause in the moment of rejecting four richly caparisoned coursers, which I had had wild thoughts of harnessing.

"Can this be possible, uncle?" asked Mrs. Joe. "What can the boy mean?"

"I 'll tell you, mum," said Mr. Pumblechook. "My opinion is it is a sedan-chair. Well, boy, and what did you play at?"

"We played with flags," I said.

"Flags!" echoed my sister.

"Yes," said I. "Estella waved a blue flag, and I waved a red one, and Miss Havisham waved one sprinkled all over with little gold stars, out at the coach window. And then we all waved our swords and hurrahed."

"Swords!" repeated my sister. "Where did you get swords from?"

"Out of the cupboard," said I. "And I saw pistols in it — and jam — and pills. And there was only candlelight in the room."

If they had asked me any more questions I should undoubtedly have betrayed myself for I was just on the point of mentioning that there was a balloon in the yard and should have hazarded the statement, but that my invention was divided between that phenomenon and a bear in the brewery.

My hearers were so much occupied, however, in discussing the marvels I had already presented to them, that I escaped. The subject still held them when Joe came in, and my experiences were at once related to him. Now, when I saw his big blue eyes open in helpless amazement, I became penitent, but only in regard to him. And so, after Mr. Pumblechook had driven off, and my sister was busy, I stole into the forge and confessed my guilt.

"You remember all that about Miss Havisham's?" I said.

"Remember!" said Joe. "I believe you! Wonderful!"

"It 's a terrible thing, Joe. It ain't true."

"What are you a-telling of, Pip?" cried Joe. "You don't mean to say it!"

"Yes, I do; — it 's lies, Joe."

"But not all of it? Why, sure you don't mean to say, Pip, that there was no black welvet co—ch?" For I stood there shaking my head. "But at least there was dogs, Pip? Come, Pip, if there war n't no weal cutlets, at least there was dogs? A puppy, come."

"No, Joe," I said. "There was nothing of the kind."

As I fixed my eyes hopelessly on him, he looked at me in dismay. "Pip, old chap," he said, "this won't do, I say. Where do you expect to go to? What possessed you?"

"I don't know what possessed me," I replied, hanging my head, "but I wish you had n't taught me to call knaves at cards Jacks, and I wish my boots were n't so thick, nor my hands so coarse."

Then I told Joe that I felt very miserable, but I had n't liked to tell Mrs. Joe and Uncle Pumblechook about the beautiful young lady at Miss Havisham's who was so proud, and that she had said I was common, and that I wished I was not common, and that the lies had come out of it somehow, though I did n't know how.

"Well," said Joe after a good deal of thought, "there 's one thing you may be sure of, Pip, namely, that lies is lies. Howsoever they come, they did n't ought to come, and they come from the father of lies and work round to the same. Don't you tell no more of 'em, Pip. They ain't the way to get out of being common, old chap. And as to being common, I don't make it out at all clear. You 're sure an uncommon scholar."

This I denied in the face of Joe's most forcible arguments, and at the end of our talk, I said, "You are not angry with me, Joe?"

"No, old chap, but if you can't get to being uncommon through going straight, you 'll never get to do it through going crooked. So don't tell no more on 'em, Pip. Don't never do it no more."

When I got up to my little room and said my prayers, I thought over Joe's advice and knew that it was right, and yet my mind was in such a disturbed and unthankful state, that for a long time I lay awake, not thinking over my sins, but still mourning that Joe and Mrs. Joe and I were all common.

That was a memorable day for me, and it wrought great changes in me. I began to see things and people from a new point of view, and from that day dates the beginning of my great expectations.

One night, a little later, I was at the village Public House with Joe, who was smoking his pipe with friends. In the room there was a stranger, who, when he heard me addressed as Pip, turned and looked at me. He kept looking hard at me, and nodding at me, and I returned his nods as politely as possible. Presently, after seeing that Joe was not looking, he nodded again and then rubbed his leg — in a very odd way, it struck me — and later, he stirred his rum and water pointedly at me, and he tasted it pointedly at me. And he did both, not

with the spoon but with a file. He did this so that nobody but I saw the file, and then he wiped it and put it in his pocket. I knew it to be Joe's file, and I knew that he was my convict the minute I saw the instrument. I sat gazing at him, spell-bound, but he took very little more notice of me; only when Joe and I started to go, he stopped us.

"Stop half a minute, Mr. Gargery," he said; "I think I've got a bright shilling somewhere in my pocket; if I have, the boy shall have it." He took it out, folded it in some crumpled paper and gave it to me. "Yours," said he. "Mind — your own!" I thanked him, staring at him beyond the bounds of good manners, and holding tight to Joe, and then we went towards home, I in a manner stupefied, and thinking only of this turning up of my old misdeed and old acquaintance.

We found my sister was not in a very bad temper, and Joe was encouraged to tell her about the shilling. I took it out of the paper to show her. "But what's this?" she said, catching up the paper. It was nothing less than two one-pound notes! Joe caught up his hat and ran with them to the Public House to restore them to their owner, only to find that he had gone. Then my sister sealed them up in a piece of paper, and put them on the top of a press in the state parlour, and there they remained.

On the appointed day I returned to Miss Havisham, and as before, was admitted by Estella. As we went up stairs we met a gentleman groping his way down. He was bald, with a large head and bushy black eyebrows. His eyes were deep set and disagreeably keen. He was nothing to me, but I observed him well as he passed.

Estella led me this time into another part of the house, and into a gloomy room where there were some other people, saying, —

"You are to go and stand there, boy, till you are wanted."

"There" being the window, I crossed to it and stood looking out, at a deserted house and old garden, in a very uncomfortable state of mind. There were three ladies and one gentleman in the room, who all stopped talking and looked at me. Later I found out that they were particular friends of Miss Havisham. The ringing of a distant bell caused Estella to say, "Now, boy!" and to conduct me to Miss Havisham's room, leaving me near the door, where I stood until Miss Havisham cast her eyes upon me.

"Are you ready to play?" she asked.

I answered, in some confusion, "I don't think I am, ma'am, except at cards; I could do that if I was wanted."

She looked searchingly at me and then asked, "If you are unwilling to play, boy, are you willing to work?"

As I answered this in the affirmative, she presently laid a hand on my shoulder. In the other she had a stick on which she leaned, and she looked like the witch of the place. She looked all round the room in a glaring manner, and then said, "Come, come, come! walk me, walk me!"

From this I made out that my work was to walk Miss Havisham round and round the room. Accordingly I started at once and she leaned on my shoulder. She was not strong, and soon she said, "Slower!" Still she went at a fitful, impatient speed, and the hand on my shoulder twitched. After a while she bade me call Estella, and on we started again round the room. If she had been alone I should have been sufficiently embarrassed, but as she brought with her the visitors, I didn't know what to do. I would have stopped, but Miss Havisham twitched my shoulder, and we posted on, — I feeling shamefaced embarrassment. The visitors remained for some time, and after they left Miss Havisham directed us to play cards as before, and as before, Estella treated me with cold scorn. After half a dozen games, a day was set for my return,

and I was taken into the yard to be fed in the former dog-like manner. Prowling about, I scrambled over the wall into the deserted garden that I had seen from the window. I supposed the house belonging to it was empty, and to my surprise I was confronted by the vision of a pale young gentleman with red eyelids and light hair, in a window, who speedily came down and stood beside me.

"Halloa!" said he; "young fellow, who let you in?"

"Miss Estella."

"Who gave you leave to prowl about? Come and fight," said the pale young gentleman.

What could I do but follow him? His manner was so final and I was so astonished that I followed where he led, as if under a spell. "Stop a minute, though," he said, "I ought to give you a reason for fighting too. There it is!" In a most irritating manner he slapped his hands against one another, flung one of his legs up behind him, pulled my hair, dipped his head and butted it into my stomach. This bull-like proceeding, besides that it was unquestionably to be regarded in the light of a liberty, was particularly disagreeable just after bread and meat. I therefore hit out at him and was going to hit out again, when he said, "Aha! Would you?" and began dancing backwards and forwards in a manner quite unparalleled within my limited experience.

"Laws of the game!" said he. Here he skipped from his left leg on to his right. "Regular rules!" Here he skipped from his right leg on to his left. "Come to the ground and go through the preliminaries!" Here he dodged backwards and forwards, and did all sorts of things, while I looked helplessly at him. I was secretly afraid of him, but I felt convinced that his light head of hair could have had no business in the pit of my stomach. Therefore I followed him without a word, to a retired nook of the garden. On his ask-

ing me if I was satisfied with the ground, and on my replying "Yes," he fetched a bottle of water and a sponge dipped in vinegar, and then fell to pulling off, not only his jacket and waistcoat, but his shirt too, in a manner at once light-hearted, business-like, and bloodthirsty.

My heart failed me when I saw him squaring at me with every demonstration of mechanical nicety, and eyeing my anatomy as if he were minutely choosing his bone. I never have been so surprised in my life as I was when I let out the first blow and saw him lying on his back, with a bloody nose and his face exceedingly foreshortened. But he was on his feet directly, and after sponging himself began squaring again. The second greatest surprise I have ever had in my life was seeing him on his back again, looking up at me out of a black eye. His spirit inspired me with great respect. He was always knocked down, but he would be up again in a moment, sponging himself or drinking out of the water bottle, and then came at me with an air and a show that made me believe he really was going to do for me at last. He got heavily bruised, for I am sorry to record that the more I hit him, the harder I hit him, but he came up again, and again, and again, until at last he got a bad fall with the back of his head against the wall. Even after that he got up and turned round and round confusedly a few times, not knowing where I was, but finally went on his knees to his sponge and threw it up, panting out, "That means you have won!"

He seemed so brave and innocent, that although I had not proposed the contest, I felt but a gloomy satisfaction in my victory. Indeed, I go so far as to hope that I regarded myself as a species of savage young wolf or other wild beast. However, I got dressed, and I said, "Can I help you?" and he said, "No, thankee," and I said, "Good afternoon," and he said, "Same to you!"

When I got into the courtyard I found Estella waiting with the keys to let me out. What with the visitors, and what with the cards, and what with the fight, my stay had lasted so long that when I neared home the light on the spit of sand off the point on the marshes was gleaming against a black night-sky, and Joe's furnace was flinging a path of fire across the road.

When the day came for my return to the scene of my fight with the pale young gentleman, I became very much afraid as I recalled him on his back in various stages of misery, and the more I thought about it, the more certain I felt that his blood would be on my head and that the law would avenge it, and I felt that I never could go back. However, go to Miss Havisham's I must, and go I did. And behold, nothing came of the late struggle! The pale young gentleman was nowhere to be seen, and only in the corner where the combat had taken place could I detect any evidences of his existence. There were traces of his gore in that spot, and I covered them with garden-mould from the eye of men, and breathed more quietly again.

That same day I began on a regular occupation of pushing Miss Havisham in a light garden chair (when she was tired of walking with her hand on my shoulder) round through the rooms. Over and over and over again we made these journeys, sometimes lasting for three hours at a stretch, and from that time I returned to her every alternate day at noon for that purpose, and kept returning through a period of eight or ten months. As we began to be more used to one another, Miss Havisham talked more to me, and asked me many questions about myself. I told her I believed I was to be apprenticed to Joe, and enlarged on knowing nothing, and wanting to know everything, hoping that she might offer me some help. But she did not, on the contrary she seemed to prefer my being ignorant. Nor did she give me any money, nor anything but

my daily dinner. Estella always let me in and out. Sometimes she would coldly tolerate me, sometimes condescend to me, sometimes be quite familiar with me, and at other times she would tell me that she hated me; and all the time my admiration for her grew apace.

There was a song Joe used to hum at the forge, of which the burden was "Old Clem." The song imitated the beating upon iron. Thus you were to hammer; — Boys round — Old Clem! With a thump and a sound — Old Clem! Beat it out, beat it out — Old Clem! With a clink for the stout — Old Clem! Blow the fire, blow the fire — Old Clem! Roaring dryer, soaring higher — Old Clem! One day I was crooning this ditty as I pushed Miss Havisham about. It happened to catch her fancy and she took it up in a low brooding voice. After that it became customary with us to sing it as we moved about, and often Estella joined in, though the whole strain was so subdued that it made less noise in the grim old house than the lightest breath of wind. How could my character fail to be influenced by such surroundings? Is it to be wondered at if my thoughts were dazed, as my eyes were, when I came out into the natural light from the misty yellow rooms?

We went on this way for a long time, but one day Miss Havisham stopped short as she and I were walking and said, with displeasure: "You are growing tall, Pip!"

In answer I suggested that this might be a thing over which I had no control, and she said no more at that time, but on the following day she said:

"Tell me the name again of the blacksmith of yours to whom you were to be apprenticed?"

"Joe Gargery, ma'am."

"You had better be apprenticed at once. Would Gargery come here with you, and bring your indentures, do you think?"

I signified that I thought he would consider it an honour to be asked.

"Then let him come!"

"At any particular time, Miss Havisham?"

"There, there, I know nothing about time. Let him come soon, and come alone with you!"

In consequence, two days later, Joe, arrayed in his Sunday clothes, set out with me to visit Miss Havisham, and as he thought his court dress necessary to the occasion, it was not for me to tell him that he looked far better in his working dress. We arrived at Miss Havisham's, and as usual Estella opened the door, and led the way to Miss Havisham's room. She immediately addressed Joe, asking him questions about himself and about having me for apprentice and finally she asked to see my indentures, which Joe produced; I am afraid I was ashamed of the dear good fellow — I know I was when I saw Estella's eyes were laughing mischievously.

Miss Havisham then took a little bag from the table and handed it to me.

"Pip has earned a premium here," she said, "and here it is. There are five and twenty guineas in the bag. Give it to your Master, Pip."

I handed it to Joe, who said a few embarrassed words of gratitude to Miss Havisham.

"Good-bye, Pip," she said. "Let them out, Estella."

"Am I to come again, Miss Havisham?" I asked.

"No — Gargery is your master now. Gargery! One word!" Joe stepped back and she added, "The boy has been a good boy here, and that is his reward. Of course, as an honest man, you will expect no other."

Then we went down, and in a moment we were outside of the gate, and it was locked and Estella was gone. When we stood in the daylight alone, Joe backed up against a wall,

breathless with amazement, and repeated at intervals, "Astonishing! Pip, I do assure you this is as-ton-ishing!" Then we walked away, back to Mr. Pumblechook's, where we found my sister, and told her the great news of my earnings, and she was as much pleased as was possible for her to be.

It is a miserable thing to feel ashamed of home, I assure you. To me home had never been a very pleasant place on account of sister's temper, but Joe had sanctified it, and I believed in it. I had believed in the Best Parlour, as a most elegant place, I had believed in the Front Door as a mysterious portal of the Temple of State, I had believed in the kitchen as a chaste though not magnificent apartment; I had believed in the forge, as the glowing road to manhood and independence. Within a single year all this was changed. Now it was all coarse and common to me, and I would not have had Miss Havisham and Estella see it for the world. Once it had seemed to me that as Joe's apprentice I should be distinguished and happy. Now I regret to say that I was as dejected and miserable as was possible to be, and in my ungracious breast there was a shame of all that surrounded me.

Toward the end of my first year as Joe's apprentice I suggested that I go and call on Miss Havisham. He thought well of it, and so I went.

Everything was unchanged, except that a strange young woman came to the door, and I found that Estella was abroad being educated, and Miss Havisham was alone.

"Well," said she. "I hope you want nothing; you 'll get nothing!"

"No, indeed," I replied, "I only want you to know that I am doing very well and am always much obliged to you." We had little other conversation, and soon she dismissed me, and as the gate closed on me, I felt more than ever dissatisfied with my home, and my trade, and with everything!

When I reached home, some one hastened out to tell me that the house had been entered during my absence, and that my sister had been attacked and badly injured. Nothing had been taken from the house, but my sister had been struck a terrible blow, and lay very ill in bed for months, and when at last she could come down stairs again her mind was never quite clear, and she was unable to speak. So it was necessary to have Biddy come and take up the house-keeping, and meanwhile I kept up the routine of my apprenticeship-life, varied only by the arrival of my several birthdays, on each of which I paid another visit to Miss Havisham.

On a Saturday night, in the fourth year of my apprenticeship to Joe, he and I sat by a fire at the inn — the Three Jolly Bargemen, with a group of men. One of them was a strange gentleman who entered into the discussion on hand with zest, and then, rising, stood before the fire. "From information I have received," said he, looking round, "I have reason to believe there is a blacksmith among you, by name Joseph Gargery. Which is the man?"

"Here is the man," said Joe.

The gentleman beckoned him out of his place, and said: "You have an apprentice called Pip. Is he here?"

To this I responded in the affirmative. The stranger did not recognise me, but I recognised him as the gentleman I had met on the stairs on my second visit to Miss Havisham. I had known him from the moment I had first been confronted with his bushy eyebrows and black eyes.

"I wish to have a private conference with you both," he said. "Perhaps we had better go to your house to have it."

So, in a wondering silence, we walked away with him towards home, and when we got there Joe let us in by the front door, and our conference was held in the state parlour.

The stranger proceeded to tell us that he was a lawyer,

Jaggers by name, and that he was the bearer of an offer to Joe, which was, that he should cancel my indentures, at my request, and for my good. He went on to say that his communication was to the effect that I had Great Expectations. Joe and I gasped and looked at one another as Mr. Jaggers continued:

"I am instructed to tell Pip that he will come into a handsome property, and that it is the desire of the present owner of that property that he be at once removed from here, and be brought up as befits a young gentleman of Great Expectations."

My dream was out! My wild fancy was realised; Miss Havisham was going to make my fortune on a grand scale.

I listened breathlessly while Mr. Jaggers added that my benefactor wished me to keep always the name of Pip, and also that the name of the benefactor was to remain a secret until such time as the person chose to reveal it. After stating these conditions, Mr. Jaggers paused, and asked if I had any objections to complying with them, to which I stammered that I had not, and Mr. Jaggers continued that he had been made my guardian, that he would provide me with a sum of money ample for my education and maintenance, and that he should advise my residing in London, and having as tutor one Matthew Pocket, whom I had heard mentioned by Miss Havisham.

"First," continued Mr. Jaggers, "you should have some new clothes. You will want some money. I will leave you twenty guineas, and will expect you in London on this day week."

He produced a purse and counted out the money, then eyeing Joe, he said, "Well, Joe Gargery, you look dumbfounded?"

"I am!" said Joe, with decision.

"Well," said Mr. Jaggers, "what if I were to make you a present as compensation?"

"For what?" said Joe.

"For the loss of the boy's services."

Joe laid a hand on my shoulder with the touch of a woman, saying:

"Pip is that hearty welcome to go free with his services, to honour and fortune, as no words can tell him! But if you think as money can make compensation to me for the loss of the little child what come to the forge,—and ever the best of friends—"

O dear, good Joe, whom I was so ready to leave, and so unthankful to—I see you again to-day, and in a very different light. I feel the loving tremble of your hand upon my arm as solemnly to-day as if it had been the rustle of an angel's wing. But, at the time, I was lost in the mazes of my good fortune, and thought of nothing else, and as Joe remained firm on the money question, Mr. Jaggers rose to go, giving me a few last instructions for reaching London.

Then he left and we vacated the state parlour at once for the kitchen, where my sister and Biddy were sitting. I told the news of my great expectations and received congratulations, which had in them a touch of sadness which I rather resented.

That night Joe stayed out on the doorstep, smoking a pipe much later than usual, which seemed to hint to me that he wanted comforting, for some reason, but in my arrogant happiness, I could not understand his feelings.

During the next week I was very busy making my preparations to leave. With some assistance I selected a suit, and went also to the hatter's and boot-maker's and hosier's, and also engaged my place on the Saturday morning coach. Then I went to make my farewells to Uncle Pumblechook, whom I found awaiting me with pride and impatience, for the news had reached him. He shook hands with me at least a hundred times, and blessed me, and stood waving his hand at me until

I passed out of sight. It was now Friday, and I dressed up in my new clothes to make a farewell visit to Miss Havisham. I felt awkward and self-conscious, and rang the bell constrainedly on account of the still long fingers of my new gloves. Miss Havisham received me as usual, and I explained to her that I was to start for London on the morrow, and that I had come into a fortune, for which I was more grateful than I could express. She asked me a number of questions, and then said:

"Well, you have a promising career before you. Be good, deserve it, and abide by Mr. Jagger's instructions. Good-bye, Pip." She stretched out her hand, and I knelt down and kissed it,—and so I left my fairy god-mother, with both her hands on her crutch-stick, standing in the middle of the dimly-lighted room.

I little dreamed then that it was not to her that I owed my Great Expectations, but to my older acquaintance, the convict, for whom I had robbed my sister's larder long ago. But of this I little dreamed, and knew nothing until years later.

And now the six days had gone, and to-morrow looked me in the face. As my departure drew near I became more appreciative of the society of my family. On this last evening I dressed myself in my new clothes for their delight, and sat in my splendour until bedtime. We had a hot supper on the occasion, and pretended to be in high spirits, although none of us were.

All night my broken sleep was filled with fantastic visions, and I arose early and sat by my window, taking a last look at the familiar view. Then came an early, hurried breakfast, and then I kissed my sister and Biddy, and threw my arms around Joe's neck, took up my little portmanteau, and walked out. Presently I heard a scuffle behind me, and there was Joe, throwing an old shoe after me. I waved my hat, and dear old Joe waved his arm over his head, crying huskily, "Hooroar!"

I walked away rapidly then, thinking it was not so hard to go, after all. But then came a thought of the peaceful village where I had been so care-free and innocent, and beyond was the great unknown world,—and in a moment, I broke into tears, sobbing:

"Good-bye, oh my dear, dear friend!" I was better after that, more sorry, more aware of my ingratitude to Joe, more gentle.

So subdued was I by my tears that when I was on the coach, I deliberated, with an aching heart, whether I should not get down when we changed horses, and walk back for one more evening at home and a better parting, but while I was still deliberating, we went on, and changed again, and then it was too late and too far for me to go back, and I must go on.

And the mists had all solemnly risen about me now, and the world lay spread before me, and I must go on. And so my boyhood came to an end, and the first stage of my Great Expectations was over.